

Introduction to Kundalini and Tantra

I have been travelling the world for the last three decades in order to pass on the message of yoga, and I find that yoga has influenced the course of human thinking tremendously. Initially of course, there was some doubt about it as many people thought that yoga was a type of religion, witchcraft or mysticism. This particularly happened because man believed matter was the ultimate point in the evolution of nature. The materialistic world did not understand yoga for some time, but as the men of science dived deep into the mysteries of matter, they came to understand and realize that matter was not the ultimate in the evolution of nature.

If that is so for one form of matter, it applies to every form of matter. This external experience, the perception you have through your senses, is a product of matter. Even your thoughts, feelings, emotions and cognitions are products of matter. Therefore, they cannot be absolute and final. This means there must be another realm of experience. And if there is another realm of experience, it must be possible to transcend the present limitations of the mind.

The mind is also matter; it is definitely not spirit. So the mind can also be transformed and made to evolve. People have begun to realize and experience this in the last few decades. And in my opinion, this marks the end of one era and the beginning of another. For those who have knowledge of science and the nature of matter, it is not difficult to understand exactly what inner experience is.

An inner experience is the manifestation of a deeper level of oneself. Dream, of course, is an experience. Your dreams may be schizophrenic but that is an expression of your own self. Thought is also a concept or expression of your own self. A piece of music is an expression of yourself, whether you compose it or just admire it. A painting or sculpture is a concept of yourself whether you create it or just admire it. That means the external world is a manifestation of your inner experience. And you can improve this experience to any extent. You can also bring about deterioration of this experience. When everything is hopeless outside, that is your experience of yourself, and if everything is beautiful outside, that is also your experience of yourself.

In the last few decades, yoga has helped millions of people improve their concepts of themselves. Yoga realizes that man is not only the mind, he is body as well. Therefore man does not experience happiness only through the mind. The body is also real and it is a part of his personality. Just by improving the condition of the body however, man will not necessarily enable his mind to experience happiness either. This is because he is not only the body and mind, he is emotion and desire as well. He is something beyond the mind or psyche. Therefore, yoga has been designed in such a way that it can complete the process of evolution of the personality in every possible direction. That is why yoga has so many branches - hatha yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga, gyana yoga, kundalini yoga, and so on.

A combined, integrated practice of yoga in one's life will definitely ensure a better quality of experience within you and without. Every seeker and practitioner on the path of yoga must remember that the various paths of yoga are to improve the quality of head, heart and hand. However, yoga does not end with the development of the personality. One level of the personality is dependent on this mind, this body and these emotions, but there is another deeper part of the personality which you have to develop with another kind of mind and emotion. This requires a special process, and that process is known as kundalini yoga.

Objective experience not the ultimate

Kundalini yoga is a part of the tantric tradition. Even though you may have already been introduced to yoga, it is necessary to know something about tantra also. Since ancient times, the wise men have realized that mind can be expanded and that experiences do not necessarily depend on an object. This means that if somebody is playing music, I can hear it, and if somebody has painted a picture, I can see it, but I can also see if there is no picture, and I can hear if there is no music. This is also a quality of man's personality which has been ignored in the last 150 to 200 years.

Tantra says that the range of mental experience can be broadened. With the help of the senses, your mind can have an experience based on an object. There can be an experience within the framework of time, space and object, but there can also be an experience beyond the framework of time, space and object. The second form of experience can happen when the present mind expands beyond its given definitions and borders, and when this experience occurs, energy is released from yourself.

For hundreds of years, people have been talking about an experience called nirvana, moksha, emancipation, self-realization, salvation or liberation, without understanding it properly. Yogis call this experience samadhi. Although many people think that in samadhi or nirvana everything is completely finished, it is definitely not a process of quitting the world. Nothing finishes, only one level of experience ends, but then another begins.

Since the dawn of creation, the tantrics and yogis have realized that in this physical body there is a potential force. It is not psychological, philosophical or transcendental; it is a dynamic potential force in the material body, and it is called kundalini. This kundalini is the greatest discovery of tantra and yoga. Scientists have begun to look into this, and a summary of some of the latest scientific experiments is included in this book. We can see from this research that science is not actually going to discover anything new in this field. It is only rediscovering and substantiating what yogis discovered many, many centuries ago.

A universal event

The seat of kundalini is a small gland at the base of the spinal cord. With the evolution of the natural forces in man, this gland has now come to a point where man can explode it. Quite a number of people have awakened this supernatural force

and they have been called rishis, prophets, yogis, siddhas and various other names according to the time, tradition and culture. In India the entire cultural setup was once organized to facilitate this explosion, but today things are a little different because materialism is a very powerful force, and for the moment, it has even stupefied the Indian minds.

For the awakening of kundalini, not only are the practices of yoga required. If this awakening is to become a universal event, then the entire social structure has to be reorganized and millions of people all over the world have to be told the purpose of their existence. The whole life from the time of conception to the moment when you leave the body, each and every thing has to be reoriented. You will see in this book how even the instinctive and emotional interaction between man and woman must be revised and refined, so that it can lead us not away from, but towards, this ultimate awakening. This reorientation has to be undertaken with the purpose of expanding the mind and opening new doors of experience.

Today we are living in a world where everyone is more or less satisfied. Man has all the comforts and everything he needs and does not need. There will come a time, however, when man will be prepared to throw off these comforts. Luxury and comfort weaken the will and keep man under constant hypnosis. Alcohol and drugs are not as dangerous as man's total slavery to luxury and comfort. He cannot pull himself away from them. It is impossible unless he has become aware of something more than what his parents and society could give him.

Formerly there were only a few seekers, but now millions and millions of people in the world are striving for a higher experience. And this higher experience is known as knowledge. When, through yoga and tantra, the awakening of kundalini takes place, a process of metamorphosis occurs in the realm of nature and in the realm of spirit. The elements of the physical body change and the elements of the mental body also.

It may be difficult for people of today to understand the whole concept, but soon humanity will comprehend it all. Matter will become unnecessary and insignificant. Behind the matter and behind the mind there is energy and there is an experience of that energy.

Proceed slowly, sensibly and systematically

Yet, you should not try to realize and experience these things abruptly. You will find here detailed instructions on the gradual preparation of your mind and body for the arousal of kundalini, and advice on elementary precautions to be observed in order to avoid unnecessary risks and obstacles. Do not try to influence your mind directly, because the mind is nothing but an extension of the body complex. Start systematically with the body, the prana, the nadis and chakras, according to the scheme outlined in this book. Then see how you evolve.

Many people, encouraged by this type of philosophy take to drugs, chemicals and other things they consider to be speedy alternatives. They are very serious people I believe, but they are not practical and systematic because they think they can transcend the role of the body in the realm of evolution. In the final evolution of

mind, matter and man, you cannot ignore either the body or the mind. You cannot even ignore the nose, the stomach or the digestive system. That is why this transcendental philosophy begins with the basic considerations of diet and yogic physiology that you find discussed here.

The discovery of the great energy began with matter. Did nuclear energy descend from heaven? No, it evolved from crude matter. Where does the experience generate from? From heaven? From the sanctum sanctorum? No, from this body and this nervous system. That is how you should be practical and sensible.

This book presents a systematic and pragmatic approach to the awakening of kundalini. It begins with an expanded understanding of the true role and potential of the body and nervous system, moving through an exhaustive examination of the different methods of awakening suitable for different personalities and conditions. You will find clear and direct instructions on the actual yogic and tantric techniques to be practised towards this goal, together with a map of possible experiences you may encounter as the practices mature, so that you can sustain this great awakening and integrate it into a more conscious and creative way of life.

We have included here a systematic schedule of practice, within the context of a philosophy that is both pragmatic and transcendental, to prepare you in every way for this great adventure in consciousness.

Chapter 1

Ye Man, Tame the Kundalini

When I was six years old I had a spontaneous spiritual experience during which I became completely unaware of my body for quite a long time. Again, when I was ten, the same thing happened, but this time I was old enough to think and rationalize, and I told my father about it. At first he did not understand what had happened and he wanted to take me to a doctor, but fortunately there were no doctors in our area at that time. Had there been, perhaps I would have ended up in a mental hospital, but things being what they were, I did not have to undergo treatment and was left unattended.

My father had great regard for the Vedas and for his guru. One day this guru happened to visit my native town, so my father took me to him and asked his advice about me. The sage told him that I had had a spiritual experience and therefore should be instructed to lead a spiritual life. My father obeyed his guru and arranged for me to be trained accordingly. Thus at an early age I was dedicated to the spiritual quest.

My family was Hindu, and in Hinduism there are two traditions: one believes in the worship of idols, and the other that God is formless. My family belonged to the latter, but still I often looked at the pictures of all the different deities and wondered at them. Durga was mounted on a lion; Saraswati on a swan; Vishnu lay sleeping on a huge cobra; Kali was completely naked, standing on the body of Shiva; Tara too

was naked and Shiva was drinking milk from her breast. I could not understand what it all meant. Why did Shiva ride upon a bull and have so many snakes wrapped around him; how could the Ganga flow from his hair; why was Ganesha, with his enormous elephantine head and pot belly, riding on a small rat? I thought that there must be some symbolic meaning behind all this, but I only began to understand it through kundalini yoga, which I started practising at the age of fifteen, while still at school.

Around this time I had another experience. I was sitting quietly when suddenly, without any effort, my mind turned inwards. I immediately saw the whole earth with its oceans, continents, mountains and cities, crack into pieces. I did not understand this vision until a few days later when the second world war broke out. This really made me begin to wonder. How could I have seen this future event symbolically in meditation when living in a remote area? I had neither heard nor read about it previously, nor had I any way of knowing that it was coming.

A new life begins

By the time I was seventeen, I was asking questions which nobody could answer. I wondered about things like the difference between perception and experience. I talked a lot about such topics with my maternal uncle and my younger sister, but this did not quench my thirst and I knew I had to go out and discover the answers for myself. I postponed my departure from home until one day my father pushed me out with ninety rupees in my pocket. Thus my wandering life began.

During my travels I met a very old swami who invited me to stay in his ashram. He had a wonderful knowledge of tantra and taught me many things. Though I knew I would never forget him, he was not my guru and after nine months I left his ashram and continued wandering. Soon after this I reached Rishikesh, where I heard about Swami Sivananda. I went to him and asked how to experience the highest consciousness. He told me to stay in his ashram and he would guide me. So I followed monastic life, but still, for a long time I was puzzled about the purpose of my existence. I felt that man was a seeker, yet I really did not know what I was seeking and was often left with the terrifying question that man asks himself regarding death.

The awakening of my kundalini

Sometime later I had another experience while sitting on the banks of the Ganga. I was thinking of some mundane things when my mind spontaneously started going in and in. Suddenly I felt as if the earth was slipping from under me and the sky was expanding and receding. A moment later I experienced a terrible force springing from the base of my body like an atomic explosion. I felt that I was vibrating very fast, the light currents were terrific. I experienced the supreme bliss, like the climax of a man's desire, and it continued for a long time. My whole body was contracting until the feeling of pleasure became quite unbearable and I lost complete awareness of my body. This was the third time it had happened.

After returning to consciousness I was listless for many days. I could not eat, sleep or move, even to go to the toilet. I saw everything but nothing registered. The bliss was a living thing within me and I knew that if I moved, this wonderful feeling would cease; I would lose the intensity of it all. How could I move when bells were ringing inside? This was the awakening of my kundalini.

After a week or so I returned to normal and then I started to study tantra and yoga very seriously. At first I was still a bit weak and sick, so I practised hatha yoga to purify my whole system. Then I began to explore the fantastic science of kundalini yoga. What is this power which awakens in mooladhara chakra? My interest was aroused and I put much effort into trying to understand this marvellous force.

With the awakening of kundalini, the greater intelligence is aroused from its sleep and you can give birth to a new range of creativity. When kundalini awakens, not only are you blessed with visions and psychic experiences, you could become a prophet, saint, inspired artist or musician, a brilliant writer or poet, a clairvoyant or messiah. Or you could become an outstanding leader, prime minister, governor or president. The awakening of kundalini affects the whole area of the human mind and behavior.

Kundalini is not a myth or an illusion. It is not a hypothesis or a hypnotic suggestion. Kundalini is a biological substance that exists within the framework of the body. Its awakening generates electrical impulses throughout the whole body and these impulses can be detected by modern scientific instruments and machines. Therefore, each of us should consider the importance and the benefits of awakening kundalini, and we should make a resolve to awaken this great shakti.

Chapter 2

What is Kundalini?

Everybody should know something about kundalini as it represents the coming consciousness of mankind. Kundalini is the name of a sleeping dormant potential force in the human organism and it is situated at the root of the spinal column. In the masculine body it is in the perineum, between the urinary and excretory organs. In the female body its location is at the root of the uterus, in the cervix. This center is known as mooladhara chakra and it is actually a physical structure. It is a small gland which you can even take out and press. However, kundalini is a dormant energy, and even if you press it, it will not explode like a bomb. To awaken kundalini you must prepare yourself through yogic techniques. You must practise asanas, pranayama, kriya yoga and meditation. Then, when you are able to force your prana into the seat of kundalini, the energy wakes up and makes its way through sushumna nadi, the central nervous canal, to the brain. As kundalini ascends, it passes through each of the chakras which are interconnected with the different silent areas of the brain. With the awakening of kundalini there is an explosion in the brain as the dormant or sleeping areas start blossoming like flowers. Therefore, kundalini can be equated with the awakening of the silent areas of the brain.

Although kundalini is said to reside in mooladhara chakra, we are all at different stages of evolution, and in some of us kundalini may have already reached swadhisthana, manipura or anahata chakra. If this is so, whatever sadhana you do now might start an awakening in anahata or some other chakra. However, awakening of kundalini in mooladhara chakra is one thing, and awakening in sahasrara, the highest center of the brain, is another. Once the multipetalled lotus of sahasrara blossoms, a new consciousness dawns. Our present consciousness is not independent, as the mind depends on the information supplied by the senses. If you have no eyes, you can never see; if you are deaf, you will never hear. However, when the superconsciousness emerges, experience becomes completely independent and knowledge also becomes completely independent.

How man discovered kundalini

Right from the beginning of creation, man witnessed many transcendental happenings. Sometimes he was able to read the thoughts of others, he witnessed somebody else's predictions coming true, or he may even have seen his own dreams manifesting into realities. He pondered over the fact that some people could write inspiring poems or compose beautiful music whereas others couldn't; one person could fight on the battlefield for days together and another person couldn't even get up from his bed. So he wanted to discover why everybody seemed to be different.

In the course of his investigations, man came to understand that within every individual there is a special form of energy. He saw that in some people it was dormant, in others it was evolving and in a very small minority of people, it was actually awakened. Originally, man named this energy after gods, goddesses, angels or divinities. Then he discovered prana and called it prana shakti. In tantra they called it kundalini.

What the various names for kundalini mean

In Sanskrit, kundal means a coil, and so kundalini has been described as "that which is coiled". This is the traditional belief, but it has been incorrectly understood. The word kundalini actually comes from the word kunda, meaning "a deeper place, pit or cavity". The fire used in the ceremony of initiation is kindled in a pit called kunda. Similarly, the place where a dead body is burned is kunda. If you dig a ditch or a hole it is called kunda. Kunda refers to the concave cavity in which the brain, resembling a coiled and sleeping serpent, nestles. (If you have the opportunity of examining a dissection of the human brain you will see that it is in the form of a coil or snake curled up upon itself.) This is the true meaning of kundalini.

The word kundalini refers to the shakti or power when it is in its dormant potential state, but when it is manifesting, you can call it Devi, Kali, Durga, Saraswati, Lakshmi or any other name according to the manifestation it is exhibiting before you.

In the Christian tradition, the terms "the Path of the Initiates" and "the Stairway to Heaven" used in the Bible, refer to kundalini's ascent through sushumna nadi. The ascent of kundalini and ultimately, the descent of spiritual grace, are symbolized by the cross. This is why Christians make the sign of the cross at ajna, anahata and vishuddhi chakras, for ajna is the center where the ascending consciousness is transcended and anahata is where the descending grace is made manifest to the world.

Whatever happens in spiritual life, it is related to the awakening of kundalini. And the goal of every form of spiritual life, whether you call it samadhi, nirvana, moksha, communion, union, kaivalya, liberation or whatever, is in fact awakening of kundalini.

Kundalini, Kali and Durga

When kundalini has just awakened and you are not able to handle it, it is called Kali. When you can handle it and are able to use it for beneficial purposes and you become powerful on account of it, it is called Durga.

Kali is a female deity, naked, black or smoky in color, wearing a mala of 108 human skulls, representing the memories of different births. Kali's lolling tongue of blood red color signifies the rajo guna whose circular movement gives impetus to all creative activities. By this specific gesture, she is exhorting the sadhakas to control their rajo guna. The sacrificial sword and the severed head held by the left hand are the symbols of dissolution. Darkness and death are by no means the mere absence of light and life, rather, they are their origin. The sadhaka worships the cosmic power in its female form, for she represents the kinetic aspect, the masculine being the static which is activated only through her power.

In Hindu mythology, the awakening of Kali has been described in great detail. When Kali rises in red anger, all the gods and demons are stunned and everybody keeps quiet. They do not know what she is going to do. They ask Lord Shiva to pacify her, but Kali roars ferociously, throwing him down and standing on his chest with her mouth wide open, thirsty for flesh and blood. When the devas hold prayers to pacify Kali, she becomes calm and quiet.

Then there is the emergence of Durga, the higher, more refined and benign symbol of the unconscious. Durga is a beautiful goddess seated on a tiger. She has 8 hands representing the eightfold elements of man.

Durga wears a mala of human heads to symbolize her wisdom and power. These heads are generally 52 in number, representing the 52 letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, which are the outer manifestations of Shabda Brahma or Brahma in the form of sound. Durga is the remover of all evil consequences of life and the giver of power and peace that is released from mooladhara.

According to yoga philosophy, Kali, the first manifestation of the unconscious kundalini is a terrible power; it completely subdues the individual soul, represented by her standing on Lord Shiva. It sometimes happens that by mental instability some people get in contact with their unconscious body and see inauspicious, ferocious

elements - ghosts, monsters, etc. When Kali, the unconscious power of man, is awakened she goes up to meet the further manifestation, being Durga, the superconscious, bestowing glory and beauty.

Symbolic representation of kundalini

In the tantric texts, kundalini is conceived of as the primal power or energy. In terms of modern psychology, it can be called the unconscious in man. As we have just discussed, in Hindu mythology, kundalini corresponds with the concept of Kali. In the philosophy of Shaivism, the concept of kundalini is represented by the shivalingam, the oval-shaped stone or pillar with a snake coiled around it.

However, most commonly, kundalini is illustrated as a sleeping serpent coiled three and a half times. Of course there is no serpent residing in mooladhara, sahasrara or any other chakra, but the serpent has always been a symbol for efficient consciousness. In all the oldest mystic cults of the world you find the serpent, and if you have seen any pictures or images of Lord Shiva, you will have noticed serpents girdling his waist, neck and arms. Kali is also adorned with serpents and Lord Vishnu eternally reposes on a large coiled serpent. This serpent power symbolizes the unconscious in man.

In Scandinavian, European, Latin American and Middle Eastern countries and many different civilizations of the world, the concept of the serpent power is represented in monuments and ancient artifacts. This means kundalini was known to people from all parts of the world in the past. However, we can conceive kundalini in any manner we like because actually, prana has no form or dimension, it is infinite.

In the traditional descriptions of kundalini awakening, it is said that kundalini resides in mooladhara in the form of a coiled snake and when the snake awakens it uncoils and shoots up through sushumna (the psychic passage in the center of the spinal cord), opening the other chakras as it goes (see Sir John Woodroffe's *The Serpent Power*). Brahmachari Swami Vyasdev, in his book *Science of the Soul*, describes the awakening of kundalini in the following way:

"Sadhakas have seen the sushumna in the form of a luminous rod or pillar, a golden yellow snake, or sometimes as a shining black snake about ten inches long with blood redevyes like smouldering charcoal, the front part of the tongue vibrating and shining like lightning, ascending the spinal column."

The meaning of the 3 1/2 coils of the serpent is as follows: The 3 coils represent the 3 matras of Om, which relate to past, present and future; to the 3 gunas: tamas, rajas and sattva; to the 3 states of consciousness: waking, sleeping and dreaming; and to the 3 types of experience: subjective experience, sensual experience and absence of experience. The 1/2 coil represents the state of transcendence, where there is neither waking, sleeping nor dreaming. So, the 3 1/2 coils signify the total experience of the universe and the experience of transcendence.

Who can awaken kundalini?

There are many people who have awakened their kundalini. Not only saints and sadhus, but poets, painters, warriors, writers, anyone can awaken their kundalini. With the awakening of kundalini, not only visions of God take place, there is dawning of creative intelligence and an awakening of supramental faculties. By activating kundalini you may become anything in life.

The energy of kundalini is one energy, but it expresses itself differently through the individual psychic centers or chakras - first in gross instinctive ways and then in progressively more subtle ways. Refining of the expression of this energy at higher and more subtle levels of vibration represents the ascent of human consciousness to its highest possibilities.

Kundalini is the creative energy; it is the energy of self-expression. Just as in reproduction a new life is created, in the same way, someone like Einstein uses that same energy in a different, more subtle realm, to create a theory like relativity. It is the same energy that is expressed when someone composes or plays beautiful music. It is the same energy which is expressed in all parts of life, whether it is building up a business, fulfilling the family duties or reaching whatever goal you aspire for. These are all expressions of the same creative energy.

Everybody, whether householder or sannyasin, must remember that awakening of kundalini is the prime purpose of human incarnation. All the pleasures of sensual life which we are enjoying now are intended only to enhance the awakening of kundalini amidst the adverse circumstances of man's life.

A process of metamorphosis

With the awakening of kundalini, a transformation takes place in life. It has little to do with one's moral, religious or ethical life. It has more to do with the quality of our experiences and perceptions. When kundalini wakes up your mind changes and your priorities and attachments also change. All your karmas undergo a process of integration. It is very simple to understand. When you were a child you loved toys, but why don't you love them now? Because your mind has changed and consequently, your attachments have also changed. So, with the awakening of kundalini, a metamorphosis takes place. There is even the possibility of restructuring the entire physical body.

When kundalini awakens, the physical body actually undergoes many changes. Generally they are positive, but if your guru is not cautious, they can be negative also. When the shakti wakes up, the cells in the body are completely charged and a process of rejuvenation also starts. The voice changes, the smell of the body changes and the hormonal secretions also change. In fact, the transformation of cells in the body and brain takes place at a much higher rate than normal. These are just a few observations. However, scientific researchers are still taking their first steps into this field.

Why awaken kundalini?

If you want to take up the practice of kundalini yoga, the most important thing is that you have a reason or an aim. If you want to awaken kundalini for psychic powers, then please go ahead with your own destiny. But if you want to awaken kundalini in order to enjoy communion between Shiva and Shakti, the actual communion between the two great forces within you, and if you want to enter samadhi and experience the absolute in the cosmos, and if you want to understand the truth behind the appearance, and if the purpose of your pilgrimage is very great, then there is nothing that can come to you as an obstacle.

By means of kundalini awakening, you are compensating with the laws of nature and speeding up the pace of your physical, mental and spiritual evolution. Once the great shakti awakens, man is no longer a gross physical body operating with a lower mind and low voltage prana. Instead, every cell of his body is charged with the high voltage prana of kundalini. And when total awakening occurs, man becomes a junior god, an embodiment of divinity.

Chapter 3

Kundalini Physiology

Kundalini or the serpent power does not belong to the physical body, though it is connected to it. Nor can it be discovered in the mental body or even the astral body. Its abode is actually in the causal body, where the concepts of time, space and object are completely lost.

How and where is the concept of kundalini related to the supreme consciousness? The serpent power is considered to arise from the unconscious state in mooladhara. This unconscious awareness of man then has to pass through different phases and becomes one with the cosmic awareness in the highest realm of existence. The supreme awareness or Shiva is considered to be seated in sahasrara, the superconscious or transcendental body at the crown of the head. In the Vedas, as well as the Tantras, this supreme seat is called *hiranyagarbha*, the womb of consciousness. It corresponds to the pituitary body, the master gland situated within the brain.

Immediately below this center of supreme consciousness, there is another psychic center - "the third eye" or ajna chakra, which corresponds to the pineal gland. This is the seat of intuitive knowledge. This center lies on top of the spinal column, at the level of *bhrumadhya*, the eyebrow center. Ajna chakra is important because it is simultaneously connected with the seat of supreme consciousness in sahasrara and with mooladhara, the seat of the unconscious, at the base of the spine, via sushumna, the psychic passage within the spinal column. Therefore, it is the connecting link between the lowest unconscious seat of power and the highest center of illumination within the individual.

Kundalini yoga is not abstract. It considers this very physical body as the basis. For a kundalini yogi, the supreme consciousness represents the highest possible manifestation of physical matter in this body. The matter of this physical body is

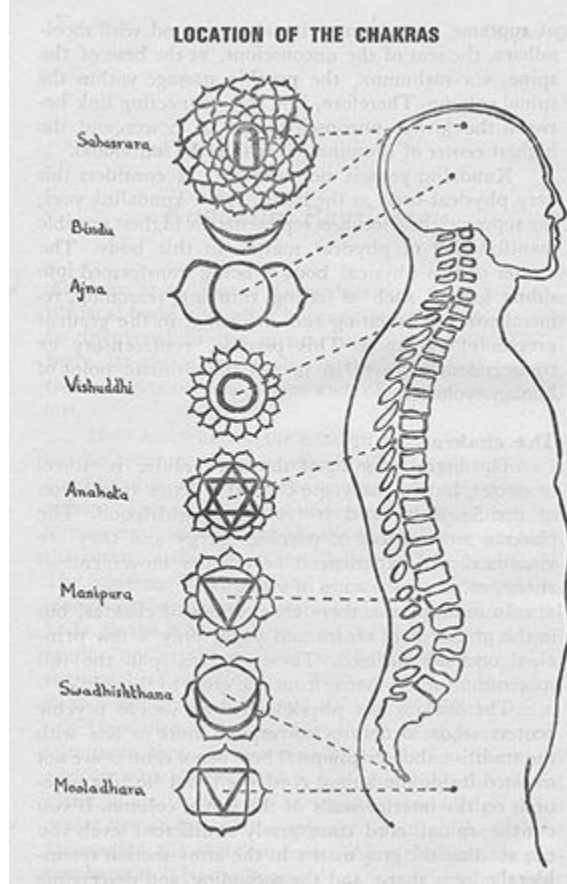
being transformed into subtle forces - such as feeling, thinking, reasoning, remembering, postulating and doubting, in the gradual process of evolution. This psychic, suprasensory or transcendental power in man is the ultimate point of human evolution.

The chakras

The literal meaning of the word chakra is 'wheel or circle', but in the yogic context a better translation of the Sanskrit word is 'vortex or whirlpool'. The chakras are vortices of psychic energy and they are visualized and experienced as circular movements of energy at particular rates of vibration.

In each person there are myriads of chakras, but in the practices of tantra and yoga, only a few principal ones are utilized. These chakras span the full spectrum of man's being from the gross to the subtle.

The chakras are physiological as well as psychic centers whose structures correspond more or less with the traditional descriptions. These nerve centers are not situated inside the spinal cord itself, but lie like junctions on the interior walls of the spinal column. If you cut the spinal cord transversely at different levels you can see that the grey matter in the cross section resembles the lotus shape and the



ascending and descending tracts of nerve fibers correspond to the nadis. These communicating nerve fibers control the different physiological functions of that portion of the body. Many books state that the chakras are reservoirs of power, but this is not true.

A chakra is like a centrally placed electricity pole from which electrical wires are run to different places, houses and street lights in the vicinity. This arrangement is the same for each of the chakras. The nadis which emerge from each chakra carry prana in both directions. There is a forward and backward pranic motion in the nadis, analogous to the flow of alternating current in electrical wires. The outgoing communication and the incoming reaction enter and leave the chakra in the form of this pranic flow in the corresponding nadis.

There are six chakras in the human body which are directly connected with the higher unilluminated centers of the brain. The first chakra is mooladhara. It is situated in the pelvic floor and corresponds to the coccygeal plexus of nerves. In

the masculine body it lies between the urinary and excretory openings, in the form of a small dormant gland termed the perineal body. In the feminine body it is situated inside the posterior surface of the cervix.

Mooladhara is the first chakra in the spiritual evolution of man, where one goes beyond animal consciousness and starts to be a real human being. It is also the last chakra in the completion of animal evolution. It is said that from mooladhara chakra right down to the heels there are other lower chakras which are responsible for the development of the animal and human qualities of instinct and intellect. From mooladhara chakra upwards lie the chakras which are concerned with illumination and evolution of the higher man or super man. Mooladhara chakra has control over the entire range of excretory and sexual functions in man.

The second chakra is *swadhisthana*, located at the lowest point or termination of the spinal cord. It corresponds to the sacral plexus of nerves and controls the unconscious in man.

The third chakra is *manipura*, situated in the spinal column exactly at the level of the navel. It corresponds to the solar plexus and controls the entire processes of digestion, assimilation and temperature regulation in the body.

The fourth chakra is *anahata*, and it lies in the vertebral column behind the base of the heart, at the level of the depression in the sternum. It corresponds to the cardiac plexus of nerves, and controls the functions of the heart, the lungs, the diaphragm and other organs in this region of the body.

The fifth chakra is *vishuddhi*, which lies at the level of the throat pit in the vertebral column. This chakra corresponds to the cervical plexus of nerves and controls the thyroid complex and also some systems of articulation, the upper palate and the epiglottis.

Ajna, the sixth and most important chakra, corresponds to the pineal gland, lying in the midline of the brain directly above the spinal column. This chakra controls the muscles and the onset of sexual activity in man. Tantra and yoga maintain that ajna chakra, the command center, has complete control over all the functions of the disciple's life.

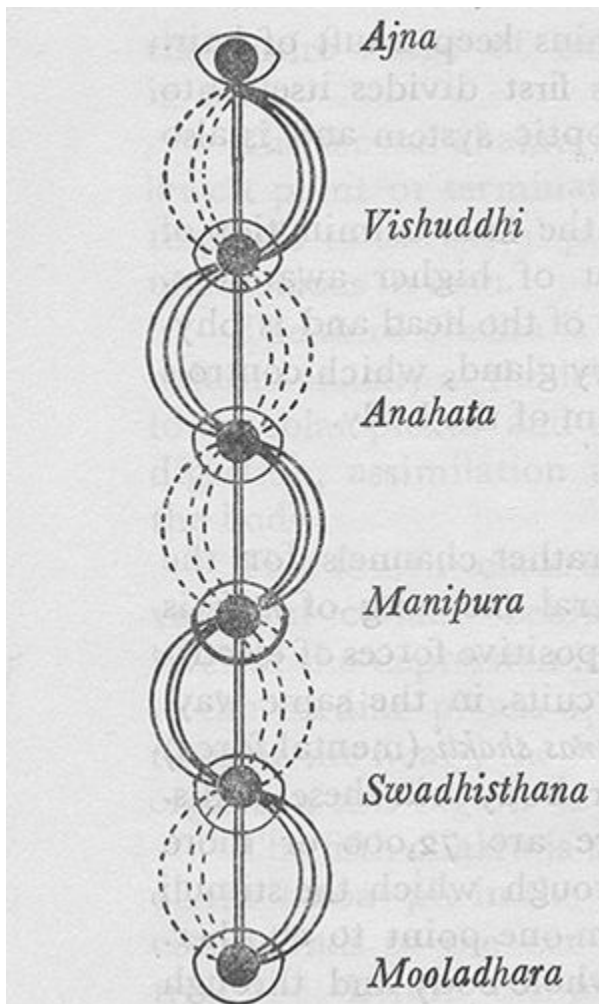
These six chakras serve as switches for turning on different parts of the brain. The awakening which is brought about in the chakras is conducted to the higher centers in the brain via the nadis.

There are also two higher centers in the brain which are commonly referred to in kundalini yoga: bindu and sahasrara. *Bindu* is located at the top back of the head, where Hindu brahmins keep a tuft of hair. This is the point where oneness first divides itself into many. Bindu feeds the whole optic system and is also the seat of nectar or amrit.

Sahasrara is supreme; it is the final culmination of kundalini shakti. It is the seat of higher awareness. Sahasrara is situated at the top of the head and is physically correlated to the pituitary gland, which controls each and every gland and system of the body.

Nadis

Nadis are not nerves but rather channels for the flow of consciousness. The literal meaning of *nadi* is 'flow'. Just as the negative and positive forces of electricity flow through complex circuits, in the same way, *prana shakti* (vital force) and *manas shakti* (mental force) flow through every part of our body via these nadis. According to the tantras there are 72,000 or more such channels or networks through which the stimuli flow like electric current from one point to another. These 72,000 nadis cover the whole body and through them the inherent rhythms of activity in the different organs of the body are maintained. Within this network of nadis, there are ten main channels, and of these ten, three are most important for they control the flow of prana and consciousness within all the other nadis of the body. These three nadis are called ida, pingala and sushumna.



Ida nadi controls all the mental processes while pingala nadi controls all the vital processes. Ida is known as the moon, and pingala as the sun. A third nadi, sushumna, is the channel for the awakening of spiritual consciousness. Now the picture is coming clear; prana shakti - pingala; manas shakti - ida; and atma shakti - sushumna. You may consider them as pranic force, mental force and spiritual force.

As sushumna flows inside the central canal of the spinal cord, ida and pingala simultaneously flow on the outer surface of the spinal cord, still within the bony vertebral column. Ida, pingala and sushumna nadis begin in mooladhara in the pelvic floor. From there, sushumna flows directly upwards within the central canal, while ida passes to the left and pingala to the right. At swadhithana chakra, or the sacral plexus, the three nadis come together again and ida and pingala cross over one another. Ida passes up to the right, pingala to the left, and sushumna continues to flow directly upwards in the central canal. The three nadis come together again at manipura chakra, the solar plexus, and so on. Finally, ida, pingala and

sushumna meet in the pineal gland - ajna chakra.

Ida and pingala function in the body alternately and not simultaneously. If you observe your nostrils, you will find that generally one is flowing freely and the other

is blocked. When the left nostril is open, it is the lunar energy or ida nadi which is flowing. When the right nostril is free, the solar energy or pingala nadi is flowing.

Investigations have shown that when the right nostril is flowing, the left hemisphere of the brain is activated. When the left nostril is flowing, the right hemisphere is activated. This is how the nadis or energy channels control the brain and the events of life and consciousness.

Now, if these two energies - prana and chitta, pingala and ida, life and consciousness, can be made to function simultaneously, then both hemispheres of the brain can be made to function simultaneously and to participate together in the thinking, living, intuitive and regulating processes.

In ordinary life this does not happen because the simultaneous awakening and functioning of life force and consciousness can take place only if the central canal - sushumna, is connected with kundalini, the source of energy. If sushumna can be connected in the physical body, it can reactivate the brain cells and create a new physical structure.

The importance of awakening sushumna

Sushumna nadi is regarded as a hollow tube in which there are three more concentric tubes, each being progressively more subtle than the previous one. The tubes or nadis are as follows: *sushumna* - signifying *tamas*, *vajrini* - signifying *rajas*, *chitrini* - signifying *sattva* and *brahma* - signifying consciousness. The higher consciousness created by kundalini passes through brahma nadi.

When kundalini shakti awakens it passes through sushumna nadi. The moment awakening takes place in mooladhara chakra, the energy makes headway through sushumna up to ajna chakra.

Mooladhara chakra is just like a powerful generator. In order to start this generator, you need some sort of pranic energy. This pranic energy is generated through pranayama. When you practise pranayama you generate energy and this energy is forced down by a positive pressure which starts the generator in mooladhara. Then this generated energy is pushed upward by a negative pressure and forced up to ajna chakra.

Therefore, awakening of sushumna is just as important as awakening of kundalini. Supposing you have started your generator but you have not plugged the cable, the generator will keep running but distribution will not take place. You have to connect the plug into the generator so the generated energy can pass through the cable to the different areas of your house.

When only ida and pingala are active and not sushumna, it's like having the positive and negative lines in your electrical cable, but no earth. When the mind receives the three currents of energy all the lights start working, but if you remove the earth wire, the lights will go down. Energy flows through ida and pingala all the time, but its effulgence is very low. When there is current flowing in ida, pingala and sushumna, then enlightenment takes place. This is how you have to understand the

awakening of kundalini, awakening of sushumna and the union of the three in ajna chakra.

The whole science of kundalini yoga concerns the awakening of sushumna, for once sushumna comes to life, a means of communication between the higher and lower dimensions of consciousness is established and the awakening of kundalini occurs. Shakti travels up sushumna to become one with Shiva in sahasrara.

Kundalini awakening is definitely not fictional or symbolic; it is electrophysiological! Many scientists are working on this, and Dr. Hiroshi Motoyama of Japan has developed a unit by which the waves and currents of energy which accompany the awakening of kundalini can be recorded and measured.

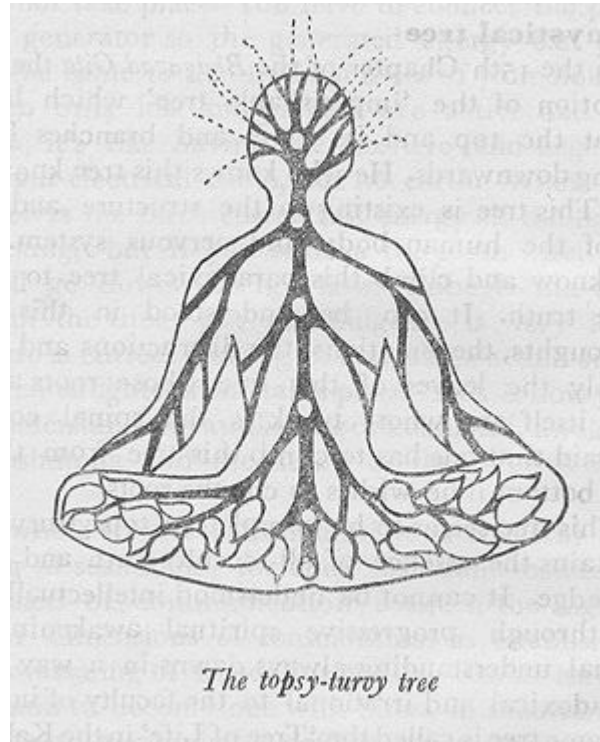
When the roots of a plant are watered properly, the plant grows and its flowers bloom forth beautifully. Similarly, when kundalini awakening occurs in sushumna, awakening occurs in all the stages of life. But if awakening only occurs in ida or pingala or in one of the other centers, it is by no means complete. Only when kundalini shakti awakens and travels up the sushumna passage to sahasrara is the entire store of higher energy in man unleashed.

The mystical tree

In the 15th Chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* there is a description of the 'imperishable tree' which has its roots at the top and its trunk and branches below, growing downwards. He who knows this tree knows the truth. This tree is existing in the structure and function of the human body and nervous system. One must know and climb this paradoxical tree to arrive at the truth. It can be understood in this way: the thoughts, the emotions, the distractions and so on, are only the leaves of this tree whose roots are the brain itself and whose trunk is the spinal column. It is said that one has to climb this tree from the top to the bottom if he wishes to cut the roots.

This tree seems to be completely topsy-turvy, yet it contains the essence of all occult truth and secret knowledge. It cannot be understood intellectually, but only through progressive spiritual awakening, for spiritual understanding always dawns in a way which is paradoxical and irrational to the faculty of intellect. This same tree is called the 'Tree of Life' in the Kabbalah and the 'Tree of Knowledge' in the Bible. Its understanding forms the basis of both Christian and Judaic religious traditions, but unfortunately it has been completely misunderstood by and large, for a very long time.

So it is that everybody who is trying to move from mooladhara to sahasrara is climbing to the root every time, and the root is at the top, the brain, the sahasrara. Mooladhara is not the root center at all. So if you are moving from swadhithana to sahasrara or from manipura to sahasrara, then you are climbing to the root, which is at the top in sahasrara.



Chapter 4

Kundalini and the Brain

The awakening of kundalini and its union with Shiva is immediately and intimately connected with the whole brain. The brain has ten compartments, and of these, nine are dormant and one is active. Whatever you know, whatever you think or do is coming from one-tenth of the brain. The other nine-tenths, which are in the frontal portion of the brain, are known as the inactive or sleeping brain.

Why are these compartments inactive? Because there is no energy. The active portion of the brain functions on the energies of ida and pingala, but the other nine-tenths have only pingala. Pingala is life and ida is consciousness. If a man is living but is unable to think, we say he has prana shakti but not manas shakti. Similarly, the silent parts of the brain have prana, not consciousness.

So a very difficult question arises: how to awaken the sleeping compartments of the brain? We know how to awaken fear, anxiety and passion, but most of us do not know how to awaken these dormant areas of the brain. In order to arouse the silent areas, we must charge the frontal brain with sufficient prana and we must awaken sushumna nadi. For both these purposes we must practise pranayama regularly and consistently over a long period of time.

Lighting up the brain

In kundalini yoga it was discovered that the different parts of the brain are connected with the chakras. Certain areas are connected with mooladhara chakra, others with swadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi and ajna. When you want to turn on an electric lamp, you don't have to touch the lamp itself, you operate it by means of the switch on the wall. Likewise, when you want to awaken the brain, you can't deal with it directly, you have to flick the switches which are located in the chakras.

Modern science divides the dormant area of the brain into ten parts, whereas in kundalini yoga we divide it into six. The qualities or manifestations of the brain are also sixfold, e.g. the psychic powers. These manifest in different individuals according to the degree of awakening in the corresponding areas of the brain. Everybody is not clairvoyant or telepathic; some people are talented musicians. Anybody can sing, but there is a center in the brain where transcendental music expresses itself.

Total and partial awakening

A genius is one who has been able to awaken one or more of the dormant areas of the brain. People who have flashes of genius are those who have had a momentary awakening in certain circuits of the brain. It is not total awakening. When the total brain wakes up, you become a junior god, an incarnation or embodiment of divinity. There are various types of geniuses - child prodigies, inspired poets, musicians, inventors, prophets, etc. In these people a partial awakening has occurred.

Sahasrara is the actual seat of kundalini

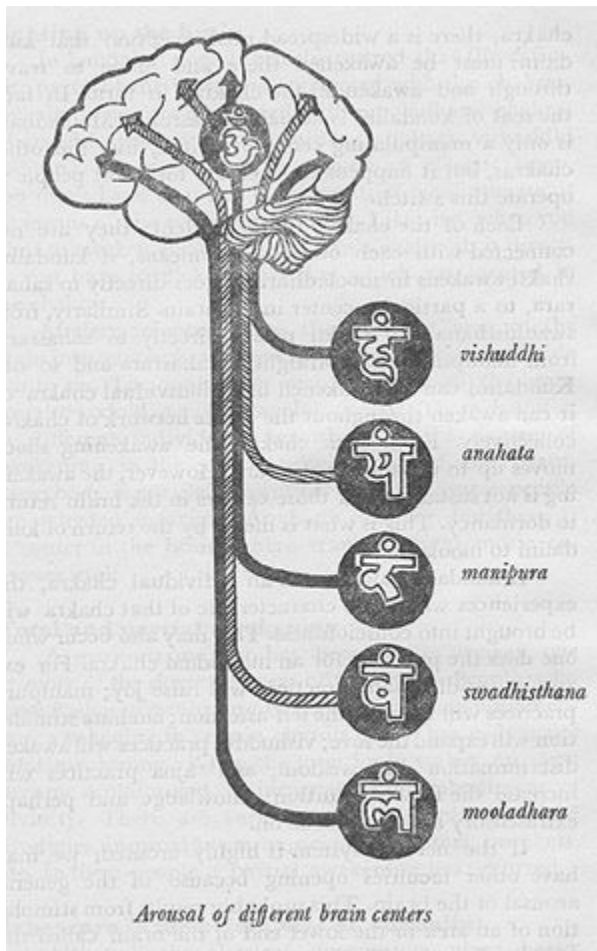
Although the classical descriptions place heavy emphasis on the awakening of kundalini in mooladhara chakra, there is a widespread misconception that kundalini must be awakened there and made to travel through and awaken all the chakras in turn. In fact, the seat of kundalini is actually sahasrara. Mooladhara is only a manipulating center or switch, like the other chakras, but it happens to be easier for most people to operate this switch.

Each of the chakras is independent; they are not connected with each other. This means, if kundalini shakti awakens in mooladhara, it goes directly to sahasrara, to a particular center in the brain. Similarly, from swadhisthana the shakti passes directly to sahasrara, from manipura it goes straight to sahasrara and so on. Kundalini can be awakened in an individual chakra or it can awaken throughout the whole network of chakras collectively. From each chakra, the awakening shock moves up to the top of sahasrara. However, the awakening is not sustained and those centers in the brain return to dormancy. This is what is meant by the return of kundalini to mooladhara.

If kundalini awakens in an individual chakra, the experiences which are characteristic of that chakra will be brought into consciousness. This may also occur when one does the practices for an individual chakra. For example, swadhisthana practices will raise joy; manipura practices will increase the self-assertion; anahata stimulation will expand the love; vishuddhi practices will awaken discrimination and wisdom, and ajna practices will increase the flow of intuition, knowledge and perhaps extrasensory abilities and so on.

If the nervous system is highly aroused, we may have other faculties opening because of the general arousal of the brain. This probably results from stimulation of an area in the lower end of the brain called the *reticular formation*. The function of this area is to rouse the whole brain or to relax it, as in sleep.

The reticular formation and related areas have an inherent rhythm which is responsible for our sleeping/waking cycles, but it is also largely activated by sensations from outside - by light, sound, touch, etc., and from inside via the autonomic nervous system. It is the latter which seems to account for the more general arousal caused by the kundalini practices and other powerful yoga practices such as kumbhaka or breath retention.



Kundalini - energy or nerve messages?

There are a number of schools of thought as to what kundalini really is. Many yogis say that kundalini is a flow of pranic energy along an esoteric pathway (sushumna) associated with the spinal axis. They consider that it is part of the flow of prana within the meshwork of the pranic body and that there is no anatomical counterpart. Other yogis relate their perceptions of kundalini to the flow of messages along the nerve fibers. These arise in the networks of the autonomic plexuses and ascend along tracts in the spinal cord to definite anatomical centers in the brain.

These schools of thought use different descriptions to convey the experience of kundalini, but they all agree that the experience of kundalini is a total psychophysiological event which centers around the spinal cord. Within the spinal cord there is a very important fluid, the cerebrospinal fluid. When, through practices such as pranayama, awakening occurs in mooladhara chakra,

this fluid gets excited. We cannot really say what happens to it because even the scientists are not exactly sure, but by studying the experiences of kundalini awakening, one thing is apparent. When the cerebrospinal fluid moves through the vertebral column, it alters the phases of consciousness and this is a very important process as far as evolution is concerned.

It is the chitta or consciousness which undergoes evolution in man. Chitta does not have a location point in the body, it is psychological in nature, but it is controlled by the information supplied by the *indriyas* or senses. While chitta is being constantly supplied with information, its evolution is blocked, but if you prevent the passage of information from the indriyas, chitta will evolve very quickly. That is to say, if you isolate chitta from the information being relayed through the eyes, nose, ears, skin and tongue, chitta is then compelled to experience independence.

When the cerebrospinal fluid is affected during pranayama, the senses become dull and their messages are relayed to chitta very slowly. Sometimes, when the cerebrospinal fluid is highly stimulated, all sensory impulses are suspended and experiences take place within the chitta. Sometimes these experiences are fantastic, you might see light, feel the whole earth trembling or experience your body as if it were as light as a piece of cotton. These and others are the experiences of chitta as a consequence of the cerebrospinal fluid's reactions.

One world renowned scientist, the late Itzhak Bentov, put forward the theory that kundalini is an effect caused by the rotation of nerve impulses around the cortex of the brain during meditation. He considered that this is caused by rhythmical pressure waves which result from the interaction of the heart beat, breathing, and the fluid inside the skull, thereby causing the brain to oscillate up and down which stimulates specific nerve currents in the brain.

Unlocking the storehouse of cosmic consciousness

Although there are varying views about kundalini, one thing is certain - kundalini has the ability to activate the human consciousness in such a way that the person can develop his most beneficial qualities, can enter a much more intimate relationship with nature about him, and can become aware of his oneness with the whole cosmos.

All the great miracles of the remote and recent past, and the ones yet to come, have sprung from what is known as the storehouse of cosmic consciousness, the golden egg, the golden womb, the hidden hiranyagarbha within the structure of the human brain. This particular center in us is not sleeping or inactive, but it is unconscious, only because we are not conscious of it. What came as revelation to the ancient rishis, to Newton and Einstein and to many other great seers, is existing in us also, but it came to their conscious plane while it does not come to ours. This is the only difference between the inspired artist and the common man.

The aim of kundalini yoga is not really to awaken the power of man, but rather to bring the power down to earth or to bring the power of the unconscious or higher consciousness, to normal consciousness. We have no need to awaken the consciousness, for it is ever awake. We have only to gain complete control over our

higher conscious forces. By means of kundalini yoga we just try to bring the centers from mooladhara to ajna into operation so that the higher knowledge will be gradually revealed to us.

Today, man has mastered the material dimension, the energy of prakriti and discovered the mysteries of nature. Now, through the process of kundalini, man should become master of the spiritual dimension.

Chapter 5

Methods of Awakening

According to the tantras, kundalini can be awakened by various methods which can be practiced individually or in combination. However, the first method cannot be practiced, because it is awakening by birth. Of course, it is too late for most of us to take advantage of this particular method, but some of us may be instrumental in producing children who have awakened kundalinis.

Awakening by birth

By a favourable birth, if your parents were highly evolved, you can have an awakened kundalini. It is also possible to be born with an awakened sushumna, ida or pingala nadi. This means that from the time of birth your higher faculties will be operating either partially or fully. If a child comes with partial awakening, he is called a saint, and if he comes with full illumination, he is known as an incarnation, avatara or son of God.

If one is born with an awakened kundalini, his experiences are very much under control. They take place in him right from the beginning in a natural way, so he never feels that something extraordinary is happening to him. A child with an awakened kundalini has clarity of vision, a high quality of thinking and a sublime philosophy. His attitude of life is somewhat unusual as he has total detachment. To him, his parents were only his means of creation, and therefore he is unable to accept the normal social relationship with them. Although he may live with them, he feels as if he were just a guest. Such a child exhibits a very matured behaviour and he does not react emotionally with anything in life. As he grows he becomes aware of his mission and purpose in life.

Many of us may wish to give birth to a yogi or an enlightened child but it is not such a simple matter. Every marriage or union of parents cannot produce a yogi, even if the man and woman practice yoga morning and night. It is only under certain circumstances that a higher being can be produced. In order to usher a highly evolved soul into this world, one has first to transform one's gross desires into spiritual aspirations.

It is very difficult to convince people of the west that a child can be born in an enlightened state, because they have the moral attitudes of a particular religion

deeply ingrained in their minds and their faith. For them, the union between a man and a woman is sin. If you explain to them that a yogi can be produced as a result of the sexual union, they say, "No! How can a yogi be born out of sin?"

It is possible that a new generation of supermen will be produced in this way. Through the practices of yoga you can transform the quality of your genes. If genes can produce artists, scientists, inventors and intellectual geniuses, then why not awakened kundalinis? You have to transform the quality of your sperm or ova by firstly transforming your whole consciousness. Neither drugs nor diet will transform your genes, but if you change your consciousness, you can then effect the elements of the body and ultimately change the quality of the sperm and ova. Then you will have children with awakened kundalinis. They will become the yogis and spiritual masters of the house who set things right for you. They will say, "Mummy, you are not the physical body." "Papa, drinking is no good."

Those of you who enter married life should go into it keeping in mind that the purpose is not just pleasure, or to produce offspring, but to create a genius. All over the world, people who marry for progeny should try for higher quality children.

Mantra

The second method of awakening kundalini is through steady regular practice of mantra. This is a very powerful, smooth and risk-free method, but of course it is a sadhana which requires time and a lot of patience. First you need to get a suitable mantra from a guru who knows yoga and tantra, and who can guide you through your sadhana. When you practise the mantra incessantly, it develops in you the vision of a higher force and enables you to live amidst the sensualities of life with indifference to them.

When you throw a pebble into a still lake, it produces circular ripples. In the same way, when you repeat a mantra over and over again, the sound force gathers momentum and creates vibrations in the ocean of the mind. When you repeat the mantra millions and billions of times, it permeates every part of your brain and purifies your whole physical, mental and emotional body.

The mantra must be chanted loudly, softly, on the mental plane and on the psychic plane. By practising it at these four levels, kundalini awakens methodically and systematically. You can also use the mantra by repeating it mentally in coordination with the breath or you can sing it aloud in the form of kirtan. This creates a great potential in mooladhara and awakening takes place.

Closely related to mantra yoga is the awakening through sound or music - nada yoga. Here the sounds are the bija mantras and the music consists of particular melodies corresponding to particular chakras. This is a most tender and absorbing way of awakening.

Tapasya

The third method of awakening is tapasya, which means the performance of austerities. Tapasya is a means of purification, a burning or setting on fire so that a

process of elimination is created, not in the physical body, but in the mental and emotional bodies. Through this process the mind, the emotions and the whole personality are cleansed of all the dirt, complexes and patterns of behavior that cause pain and suffering. Tapasya is an act of purification. It should not be misunderstood to involve standing naked in cold water or snow, or observing foolish and meaningless austerities.

When you want to eliminate a bad habit, the more you want to get rid of it, the more powerful it becomes. When you abandon it in the waking state, it appears in dreams, and when you stop those dreams, it expresses itself in your behavior or manifests in disease. This particular habit must be destroyed at its psychic root, not only at the conscious level. The samskara and vasana must be eliminated by some form of tapasya.

Tapasya is a psychological or psycho-emotional process through which the aspirant tries to set in motion a process of metabolism that will eradicate the habits that create weakness and obstruct the awakening of willpower. 'I must do this but I can't.' Why does this difference between resolution and implementation arise in the mind of the aspirant? Why is it so great? It is due to a deficiency of will; and that weakness, that distance or barrier between resolution and execution can be removed through regular and repeated practice of tapasya. Then the willpower makes a decision once and the matter is finished. This strength of will is the fruit of tapasya.

The psychology of austerity plays a very important part in the awakening of man's latent power. It is not well understood by modern man who has unfortunately accepted that man lives for 'the pleasure principle', as propounded by Freud and his disciples. The psychology of austerity is very sound and certainly not abnormal. When the senses are satisfied by the objective pleasures, by the comforts and luxuries, the brain and nervous system become weak and the consciousness and energy undergo a process of regression. It is in this situation that the method of austerity is one of the most powerful and sometimes explosive methods of awakening.

Here the manifestations are tremendous and the aspirant has to face his lower instincts in the beginning. He confronts a lot of temptations and the assaults of the satanic and tamasic forces. All the evil or negative samskaras or karmas of many, many incarnations rise to the surface. Sometimes fear manifests very powerfully or attachment to the world comes with a great force. In some people, sexual fantasies haunt the mind for days together, while others become lean and thin, or even sick. At this juncture, siddhis can appear. One develops extrasensory perceptions, he can read the minds of others, he can suppress others by a thought, or his own thoughts materialize. In the beginning, black forces manifest and all these siddhis are negative or of a lower quality. Tapasya is a very, very powerful method of awakening which everybody cannot handle.

Awakening through herbs

The fourth method of awakening is through the use of specific herbs. In Sanskrit this is called *aushadhi*, and it should not be interpreted as meaning drugs like marijuana, LSD, etc. Aushadhi is the most powerful and rapid method of awakening but it is not for all and very few people know about it. There are herbs which can

transform the nature of the body and its elements and bring about either partial or full awakening, but they should never be used without a guru or qualified guide. This is because certain herbs selectively awaken ida or pingala and others can suppress both these nadis and quickly lead one to the mental asylum. For this reason, aushadhi is a very risky and unreliable method.

In the ancient vedic texts of India, there are references to a substance called soma. Soma was a juice extracted from a creeper which was picked on special days of the dark lunar fortnight. It was placed in an earthen pitcher and buried underground until the full moon. Then it was removed and the juice was extracted and taken. This induced visions, experiences and an awakening of higher consciousness.

The Persians knew another drink, homa, which may have been the same as soma. In Brazil and some of the African countries, people used hallucinogenic mushrooms and in the Himalayan regions marijuana or hashish were taken with the thought that they might provide a shortcut in arousing spiritual awakening. From time to time, in different parts of the world, other things were also discovered and used, some being very mild in effect and others being very concentrated.

With the help of the correct herbs, purified aspirants were able to visualize divine beings, holy rivers, mountains, sacred places, holy men and so on. When the effects of the herbs were more concentrated, they could separate the self from the body and travel astrally. Of course it was often illusory, but sometimes it was a real experience as well. People were able to enter a state of samadhi and awaken their kundalini. In this particular field of awakening, the sexual instinct was completely eliminated. Therefore, many aspirants preferred this method and have been trying to discover the appropriate herbs for many centuries.

With aushadhi awakening the body becomes still and quiet, the metabolism slows and the temperature drops. As a result of this, the nerve reflexes function differently and in most cases the aushadhi awakening is a permanent one. However, the aushadhi method of awakening is no longer practiced because it was misused by the ordinary people who were neither prepared, competent nor qualified. As a result, knowledge of the herbs was withdrawn and today it is a closely guarded secret.

Everyone is craving kundalini awakening, but few people have the discipline and mental, emotional, physical and nervous preparation required to avoid damage to the brain and tissues. So, although no one is teaching the aushadhi method of awakening today, its knowledge has been transmitted from generation to generation through the guru/disciple tradition. Perhaps some day, when the nature of man changes and we find better intellectual, physical and mental responses, the science may again be revealed.

Raja yoga

The fifth method of inducing awakening is through raja yoga and the development of an equipoised mind. This is the total merging of individual consciousness with superconsciousness. It occurs by a sequential process of

concentration, meditation and communion; experience of union with the absolute or supreme.

All the practices of raja yoga, preceded by hatha yoga, bring about very durable experiences, but they can lead to a state of complete depression, in which you do not feel like doing anything. The raja yoga method is very difficult for most people as it requires time, patience, discipline and perseverance. Concentration of mind is one of the most difficult things for modern man to achieve. It cannot be undertaken before the mind has been stabilized, the karmas deactivated and the emotions purified through karma and bhakti yogas. It is the nature of the mind to remain active all the time, and this constitutes a very real danger for the people of our time, because when we try to concentrate the mind we create a split. Therefore, most of us should only practice concentration up to a certain point.

Following the awakening through raja yoga, changes take place in the aspirant. He may transcend hunger and all his addictions or habits. The sensualities of life are no longer appealing, hunger and the sexual urge diminish and detachment develops spontaneously. Raja yoga brings about a slow transformation of consciousness.

Pranayama

The sixth method of awakening kundalini is through pranayama. When a sufficiently prepared aspirant practises pranayama in a calm, cool and quiet environment, preferably at a high altitude, with a diet only sufficient to maintain life, the awakening of kundalini takes place like an explosion. In fact, the awakening is so rapid that kundalini ascends to sahasrara immediately.

Pranayama is not only a breathing exercise or a means to increase prana in the body; it is a powerful method of creating yogic fire to heat the kundalini and awaken it. However, if it is practiced without sufficient preparation, this will not occur because the generated heat will not be directed to the proper centers. Therefore, jalandhara, uddiyana and moola bandhas are practiced to lock the prana in and force it up to the frontal brain.

When pranayama is practised correctly, the mind is automatically conquered. However, the effects of pranayama are not that simple to manage. It creates extra heat in the body, it awakens some of the centers in the brain and it can hinder the production of sperm and testosterone. Pranayama may also lower the temperature of the inner body and even bring down the rate of respiration and alter the brain waves. Unless you have practised the shatkarmas first and purified the body to a degree, when these changes take place, you may not be able to handle them.

There are two important ways of awakening kundalini - one is the direct method and the other is the indirect. Pranayama is the direct method. The experiences it brings about are explosive and results are attained very quickly. Expansion is rapid and the mind attains quick metamorphosis. However, this form of kundalini awakening is always accompanied by certain experiences, and for one who is not sufficiently prepared mentally, philosophically, physically and emotionally, these experiences can be terrifying. Therefore, although the path of pranayama is a jetset

method, it is drastic and is considered to be a very difficult one that everybody cannot manage.

Kriya yoga

The seventh method of inducing awakening is kriya yoga. It is the most simple and practical way for modern day man as it does not require confrontation with the mind. Sattvic people may be able to awaken kundalini through raja yoga, but those who have a tumultuous, noisy, rajasic mind will not succeed this way. They will only develop more tensions, guilt and complexes, and may even become schizophrenic. For such people kriya yoga is by far the best and most effective system.

When you practise kriya yoga, kundalini doesn't wake up with force, nor does it awaken like a satellite or as a vision or experience. It wakes up like a noble queen. Before getting up she will open her eyes, then close them again for a while. Then she'll open her eyes again, look here and there, turn to the right and left, then pull the sheet up over her head and doze. After some time she will again stretch her body and open her eyes, then doze for a while. Each time she stretches and looks around she says, 'Hmmm'. This is what happens in kriya yoga awakening.

Sometimes you feel very grand and sometimes you don't feel quite right. Sometimes you pay too much attention to the things of life and sometimes you think everything is useless. Sometimes you eat extravagantly and sometimes you don't eat for days together. Sometimes you have sleepless nights and at other times you do nothing but sleep and sleep. All these signs of awakening and reversion, awakening and reversion keep coming every now and then. Kriya yoga does not create an explosive awakening. However, it can bring visions and other very mild and controllable experiences.

Tantric initiation

This eighth method of awakening kundalini through tantric initiation is a very secret topic. Only those people who have transcended passions, and who understand the two principles of nature, Shiva and Shakti, are entitled to this initiation. It is not meant for those who have urges lurking within them or for those who have a need for physical contact. With the guidance of a guru, this is the quickest possible way to awaken kundalini.

There are no extraordinary experiences or feelings and there's no neurosis; everything seems quite normal, but at the same time, without your knowledge, awakening is taking place. Transformation takes place and your awareness expands, but you don't know it. In this particular system, awakening and arriving at sahasrara are the same event. It takes just three seconds. However, who is qualified for this path? Few people in this world have completely transcended the sexual urge and overcome their passions.

Shaktipat

The ninth method of awakening is performed by the guru. It is called shaktipat. The awakening is instant, but it is only a glimpse, not a permanent event. When the guru creates this awakening you experience samadhi. You can practise all forms of pranayama and all asanas, mudras and bandhas without having learned them or prepared for them. All the mantras are revealed to you and you know the scriptures from within. Changes take place in the physical body in an instant. The skin becomes very soft, the eyes glow and the body emits a particular aroma which is neither agreeable nor disagreeable.

This shaktipat is conducted in the physical presence or from a distance. It can be transmitted by touch, by a handkerchief, a mala, a flower, a fruit or anything edible, depending on the system the guru has mastered. It can even be transmitted by letter, telegram or telephone.

It is very difficult to say who is qualified for this awakening. You may have lived the life of a renunciate for fifty years, but still you may not get it. You may be just an ordinary person, living a non-spiritual life, eating all kinds of rubbish foods, but the guru may give you shaktipat. Your eligibility for shaktipat does not depend on your social or immediate conduct, but on the point of evolution you have reached. There is a point in evolution beyond which shaktipat becomes effective, but this evolution is not intellectual, emotional, social or religious. It is a spiritual evolution which has nothing to do with the way you live, eat, behave or think, because generally we do these things, not because of our evolvment, but according to the way we have been brought up and educated.

Self-surrender

We have discussed the nine established methods of awakening kundalini, but there is a tenth way - don't aspire for awakening. Let it happen if it happens: "I am not responsible for the awakening, nature is accomplishing everything. I accept what comes to me." This is known as the path of self-surrender, and in this path, if you have a strong enough belief that your kundalini will indeed awaken, twenty thousand years can pass in the twinkling of an eye and kundalini will awaken instantly.

Effects of the different methods of awakening

When the awakening of kundalini takes place, scientific observations have revealed different effects. Those who have awakened kundalini from birth do not register any emotional changes. They are like blocks of wood. Those who have awakened kundalini through pranayama have a great quantum of electrical charges in the spinal column and throughout the body, and momentarily they could manifest schizophrenically.

Karma yoga and bhakti yoga are considered comparatively safe and mild methods of awakening, but the tantric methods are more scientific than the non-tantric methods, because in tantra there is no scope for suppression or dispersion of

energy. In non-tantric methods there is antagonism - one mind wants it and the same mind is saying no. You suppress your thoughts, you want to enjoy, but at the same time you think "No, it is bad."

I am not criticizing non-tantric methods. They are the mild methods which do not bring you any trouble. They are just like beer - you drink a little bit and nothing happens, drink four to ten glasses and not much will happen. But tantric methods are like LSD, you have a little and it takes you right out. If something is wrong, it is wrong; if something is right, it is right.

Chapter 6

Preparing for the Awakening

Without a guru you can practise any form of yoga, but not kundalini. This is an extremely powerful system. Kundalini yoga does not start suddenly or with fits. You don't have to make any substantial changes in your way of life, but you must begin to practise. Do not start with advanced practices; for some time you should train and prepare the physical body, then go to the mind and gradually explore the deeper levels. Before commencing the practices which bring about the actual awakening of kundalini, you must prepare yourself step by step on the physical, mental and emotional planes. If you are patient and prepare correctly, awakening of kundalini will definitely take place.

Adequate preparation is necessary to ensure that one has the strength to bear the impact of full awakening of the mighty potential force within. Most of us do not even have control over our physical manifestations and behaviors. Supposing you were given a sleep inducing injection, you would become drowsy whether you wanted to or not. This is because you have no control over the processes and actions of your brain and you do not know how to control sleep. Similarly, if you have a headache, you are unable to exert control over it. When physical manifestations such as sleep and pain are not under your control, what would happen if other manifestations began to occur in your brain? You wouldn't be able to control them. Therefore, before kundalini awakens, it is important that you are able to manage the mind.

If you can maintain a balanced mind in the face of mental and emotional conflicts and you can endure anger, worry, love and passion, disappointment, jealousy, hatred, memories of the past, sufferings and sorrows, you are ready for the awakening. If you can still feel joy when the scales are heavily loaded against you, you are an aspirant for kundalini yoga. Before you bring into use a generator of five megawatts, you must have a factory ready to utilize the energy. In the same way, before you awaken kundalini shakti, you must be able to merge yourself with the higher spirit and you must know how to utilize the creative energy of kundalini.

Therefore, if you want to follow the path of kundalini yoga, it is absolutely essential to have a guru with whom you feel intimate. Many people say the guru is

within, but are they able to communicate with him, understand him and follow his intricate instructions? If so, it is possible to proceed with this internal guidance, but few people have such a relationship with the inner guru. They need an external guru first. He will connect them with the inner guru. If you have a guru he will help you to prepare for kundalini awakening, he will be there if you need any advice and he will guide you through the crisis of awakening.

Usually, because we are religious minded people, our relationship with guru is based on a sort of formality. To us he is worshipful, respectable, superior and supreme, but at the time of awakening, all these attitudes to guru must be set aside. At this time you must evolve a more intimate attitude, as if your relationship was based on love, not merely devotion and worship. When you serve your mother you do so with an attitude of love, not respect and veneration. With this same attitude you should serve the guru, then his direct influence is upon you. Then, if there is excitement in any chakra, the relationship with guru will balance it.

The relationship between guru and disciple is the most intimate of relationships; it is neither a religious nor a legal relationship. Guru and disciple live like an object and its shadow. The guru is the best thing in spiritual life, and if you have a guru you are very fortunate. However, it is sometimes difficult to find a guru. If you haven't a guru, you can cultivate a mental picture of him, try to feel his guidance and continue practising faithfully. You will surely succeed.

The time factor

Preparation is not the job of one lifetime. Man strives spiritually life after life. In fact, this body is given to you only for that purpose. For eating, sleeping and sexual interaction a human body is not necessary, so in our lower stages of evolution we had an animal body. However, even with this human body, we still have animal in us, so these natural urges follow us. Let them, but remember, this body is not for their fulfillment alone. In this human body the consciousness is the most important point. Man is aware of his awareness and he does not only think, he knows that he thinks. The evolution of his awareness has been going on life after life. And what you have been practising for your spiritual life in the last five to ten years is in addition to what you have already done.

Supposing your children are studying in primary school and you are transferred to another city. Where will your children begin their education in the new city? Right from the beginning? No, from the point where they left their studies. The same thing happens in reincarnation. That is why, even though you may have brothers and sisters born of the same mother and father, they will be different from you. In your previous incarnation your preferences were different from theirs. May be after a few incarnations they may come to the point where you are now. So we can't say how long preparation takes, because this life is one of those milestones and you have left behind many, many milestones.

However, if you are eager to awaken kundalini and the chakras, you should not be in a hurry. Set apart twelve years of your life for this purpose. This is not to say that the awakening cannot be brought about within one, two or three years - it can be. Total awakening can even take place in a month, or the guru can give you

awakening in one day, but you will be unable to hold and sustain the awakening. When one is in possession of a weak mind which cannot sustain even a little bit of cheerfulness or excitement, or bear the death of a spouse or separation from a loved one, how can he sustain the tremendous force of an awakened kundalini? Therefore, the twelve years are not for the actual awakening, but for preparation so you can hold and sustain the awakening.

Where to begin

The practices of kundalini yoga are intended to create the awareness, not necessarily to awaken kundalini. First of all we have to decide whether kundalini is already awakened. It may already be on the way and you are opening the garage and there is no car because it is already on the highway. When you go to satsang, do some kirtan or lead a yogic lifestyle, you begin to have experiences and you realize something is happening to you. Then, when you discuss kundalini and the chakras with a guru you start to understand.

The practices that you do develop your awareness and help you to remember your connection with your past evolution. They remove the veil which separates this current incarnation from the previous one. I'll give you a very gross example.

There was a boy who was the only son of a very rich man. The boy went crazy and was sent to a mental hospital. He ran away and used to go from house to house begging for food. He did not know that his parents had died and he had inherited a large estate, cars and shops and a lot of money in fixed deposits. One day his uncle found him and had him treated properly. The boy recovered from his mental illness and remembered everything about his heritage. Similarly, there is a process of remembering, and when it takes place, you know exactly where you stand.

So, practices are necessary to remove the veil in front of the consciousness which separates the two lives. Once you know that your kundalini is already in the process of transition, then practices are of no real use. If you are practising, it is because you are forced to, and if you are not practising, it is because you are forced not to. During the period of transition of kundalini the practices are not useless, but your efforts to practise them are of no use. However, if there is no awakening, if kundalini is in mooladhara or swadhisthana or in between the two, then that's the time for the practices which are enjoined in the books.

It is very important that you awaken sushumna before kundalini. This essential point has not been stressed clearly in any books, but Swami Sivananda hinted at it in his writings. If sushumna is not opened, where will the shakti go? It will pass through either ida or pingala and complications will arise.

You must also undergo purification of the tattwas or elements and purification of the chakras and nadis. Otherwise, when kundalini awakens there will be a traffic jam. Asanas, pranayama and the hatha yoga shatkarmas provide the best means of purification. Surya namaskara and surya bheda pranayama purify pindala nadi and the shatkarmas and pranayama will purify and awaken sushumna. There are specific asanas that are very important for purifying the nadis and inducing a mild awakening in the chakras. So, start with purification of the tattwas by the hatha yoga cleansing

techniques. Take up asanas next and then pranayama. Later you can practice mudras and bandhas and then begin kriya yoga.

Awakening before preparation

If experience commence before you are properly prepared, you should immediately start to prepare yourself. The first thing to do is start fasting or switch to a light diet. You should also live quietly and avoid social interactions, reading books and magazines. Of course, during this period you must not take any drugs or medicines and you must guard against introducing any chemicals into the body.

If you minimize your interactions with the world outside, the experiences will subside after five or six days and you can resume your normal life. You should then start searching for someone who can give you further guidance.

Proceed to an ashram

When you know that kundalini is arousing, as soon as you can, you should retire to a congenial place. As far as I know, the only congenial place is an ashram, where you can be with a guru and like-minded people. An ashram is a community where the inmates have plenty of work, no attachments, no hatred or prejudices, a simple life, little to eat, no comforts nor luxuries, only the bare essentials. There are no social expectations and pressures in an ashram, there's no fashion, no show and no useless conversations and gossip. People don't interfere with each other.

If you live in an ashram the awakening of kundalini can be streamlined and if a mental crisis occurs, you are free to experience whatever happens. If you don't want to eat, it's o'key; if you can't sleep and you just want to sit, it's alright; if you have emotional problems or no emotions at all, people will understand and leave you alone.

If you stay with your family during the crisis period, they may send you off to a mental hospital. If you don't feel like eating they'll say, 'Not eating today?' And when they see you haven't eaten for a few days, they'll say, 'Something is wrong with him', and they'll try to get you to see a doctor. Or if you are married, when your behaviour seems a little strange, your partner might be ready to divorce you. So it is much better to get out of these places. That is why there are so many monasteries and ashrams all over the world.

What to practise in the ashram

In the ashram you should practise purification of the physical body through the shatkarmas, to balance the acid, wind and mucus in the body. Physical and mental purification will also take place on account of the pure and simple ashram diet. The

physical body must be kept very, very light and made sattvic and entirely free of toxins.

If you are a bhakta by temperament, spend your time in prayer, kirtan or bhajan. If you are an intellectual, then read books, talk minimum, practise hatha yoga and fast from time to time. If you are a very active person, work hard and dedicate yourself to karma yoga.

It is also necessary to perfect the sitting posture, as you must be able to sit comfortably in one of the three postures: siddhasana/siddha yoni asana, padmasana or vajrasana. The best and most powerful of these is siddhasana/siddha yoni asana.

Some people think they should practise a lot of meditation or pranayama when kundalini is ascending so it will go straight to sushumna. However, I don't think meditation is necessary anymore, because when kundalini is in the process of transition, you can do nothing with your mind. If it is quiet, it is quiet, nothing can disturb it. If your mind is agitated, you can do nothing about it because that is the effect of the awakening of kundalini. It is not the effect of your practice.

The movement of consciousness during the transition of kundalini is spontaneous, whether it is depression, a state of trance, an experience or visions a feeling or sensation in the body; you can't alter any of them. They will continue because they are forced on you, they are evolving in you because you are passing through that stage. But if you live in the non-agitating ashram environment and partake of ashram food and share in the karma yoga, there will not be disturbances in your experiences.

Regarding pranayama or kriyas, when the experience is moving onwards, pranayama happens by itself, you don't have to think what to do. Sometimes kevala kumbhaka takes place, or you automatically begin to practise bhastrika or ujjayi. Moola bandha or vajroli happen by themselves, or you begin to do asanas spontaneously. So you don't have to worry, just follow the flow of experience and take care of your environment and food, and make sure nobody disturbs you.

The role of karma yoga

Karma yoga is a very important part of spiritual life. Even if you practise austerity or mantra, use herbs, practise pranayama, undergo tantric initiation or get shaktipat, or are born with awakened kundalini, if you do not follow the path of karma yoga, your evolution will definitely be retarded at some point.

If you have a good, strong automobile but the road is bumpy and covered in rocks, pebbles and marsh, try to accelerate and see what happens. It is very important that the mind is prepared and the personality is rendered ready. Samskaras, positive and negative, must be exhausted, awareness must be extended to every level, dedication or consecration must be perfected, your attachments, illusions and infatuations must be spotted, scrutinized and analyzed. All that is not possible without doing karma yoga.

Karma yoga is not directly responsible for the awakening of kundalini, but without its practice, kundalini cannot budge even one centimeter. Therefore, you can

understand how important karma yoga is in the life of a disciple. You must read a lot about karma yoga in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Perhaps that is the only philosophical and yogic explanation of karma yoga.

The need of discipline

Some people who have awakened kundalini look quite abnormal, and they behave in a peculiar way. They are very disorganized, unsystematic and totally confused, and you can't understand what they are doing. Therefore, in yoga you are advised to discipline yourself right from the beginning, so that when kundalini wakes up you remain disciplined. Otherwise you might go out to the street and just lie down there in a heap.

Sometimes I used to feel like this. When I was living in Rishikesh with my guru, I decided to visit the Ganga each morning and cross it five times, swimming through the icy cold water. One day Swami Sivananda called me and said: "Are you going to continue your swimming or am I going to put you out of this ashram?" This brought me back to my senses.

Life has to be disciplined, so that when kundalini awakens you can remain unconfused. You have to go to the office, bank, shops, and drive a car as well. Everybody cannot become a swami or stay in an ashram.

Specific recommendations

If the awakening of kundalini takes place through birth, pranayama, tantric initiation or shaktipat, you don't have to know anything. In these situations everything is beyond control; whether things go right or wrong; you are helpless. But when awakening takes place through the other methods, there are certain steps to take.

Except in tantric initiation, the sexual obligations have to be kept at bay. Food should be minimum, light and pure. One must have a guru and seek his guidance. Isolation from people is also very important.

Often when kundalini awakens in a person, he develops some sort of power. Some aspirants can materialize things, see clairvoyantly, hear clairaudiently Or read the minds of others. And when you are amongst many people, it becomes a great temptation to exercise these powers. This can be dangerous. Whereas some people will not care if you can read their mind, others will feel it is a great impingement on their privacy and they may even want to shoot you. You see, people get scared at the exhibition of siddhis, so if you are facing any psychic manifestations, you will have to control them by force.

You know the great Tibetan yogi, Milarepa? He learned certain forms of magic and when he developed powers, he took revenge on his uncle and relatives. He created hailstorms that destroyed crops, huts and even lives, because he was then an ordinary man with love and hatred, friends and enemies. As long as you have

likes and dislikes, you must not know what psychic powers you have. Milarepa had to perform penance for his misdeeds and suffer a lot at the hands of his guru.

Awakening by mantra and the need for seclusion

When awakening takes place by mantra, you will have to adjust your diet and retire from sexual obligations, not permanently, just for a while. From time to time it is also beneficial if you enter total seclusion. Twice a year is sufficient. In the beginning, start with one complete day. Then increase to three days, and when you are used to it, extend to a maximum period of nine days. It is preferable if you practise seclusion when it is neither too hot nor too cold.

During your first day of seclusion, observe silence and take only very light food and very little. Do not meditate or try to concentrate. From morning until evening, with a few breaks here and there, only practise your mantra on a mala. Don't do it with exertion or strain, and if you become introverted, stop it. Maintain your mental concept with the external experiences; do not aspire for an introverted meditative state. If introversion forces itself, keep your eyes open. Practise this for twelve hours, but not in one stretch. And for the last hour you must sit in meditation.

Next time you enter seclusion, go for three to nine days. During this period, devote as much time as possible to the repetition, resolution and reflection of the mantra. On the last day, at the end of the process, sit quietly for one hour of meditation.

Seclusion is actually recommended for all who are undergoing awakening of kundalini. At that time it is best to retire from active life and family environments for at least 45 days. Unless you are in semi-seclusion from the world at the time of awakening, as well as having strange experiences and hallucinations, you may have peculiar doubts, fears, anger and strong passions.

Sadhus live in seclusion because when there are interactions with people, so many thought currents move in the mind. Mixing with people, talking and gossiping create crosscurrents of love, hatred, infatuation, likes and dislikes, restlessness, worry and anxiety, desires and passions. Therefore, if you are practising a lot of sadhana or you are facing the awakening of kundalini, do not have very much interaction with people. Then you will be spared a lot of mental turmoil.

Chapter 7

Diet for Kundalini Awakening

When the awakening of kundalini takes place it is important to have the correct diet, as food influences the mind and your nature. At the time of awakening, certain physiological changes occur in the body, particularly in the digestive system, and the digestive process is frequently disturbed, or hunger vanishes completely. Therefore, a kundalini aspirant has to be very careful about his diet.

Scientific observations have shown that the awakening of kundalini is generally accompanied by a state of nervous depression. The inner body temperature undergoes erratic changes and drops so much that it becomes much lower than the outer body temperature. Metabolism slows down and sometimes it even stops completely. Consumption of oxygen also falls. Therefore, when you are experiencing kundalini awakening your diet must be very light and easy to assimilate.

The best diet for a kundalini yogi is boiled food. Crushed wheat, barley, lentils and dal are excellent foods, particularly when they are in a liquid form. Fats and greasy foods should be avoided and protein should be kept to a minimum. This will take any strain off the liver, because when the mind undergoes a crisis, the liver is overtaxed.

It is good to increase the carbohydrates in your diet, eg. rice, wheat, maize, barley, potato, etc., because carbohydrates help to maintain the inner body temperature and they do not require much heat to digest. Eggs, chicken and other heavy foods do not produce much heat themselves, but they require heat for digestion.

The yogic diet is macrobiotic, it is simple, plain and relatively bland. From time to time, fruits and roots can also be taken, but they are not essential.

Dietary misconceptions

A great misunderstanding has taken place in the last twenty to thirty years, and that is that a yogi should only take milk, fruit and raw vegetables. On the basis of personal observations, trials and errors, I can never accept that this is correct. There are certain foods which are not meant for the human body at all. If you analyze your digestive and salivary secretions and the durability of the mucus membranes in the alimentary canal, you will find that they are not really meant for digesting meat and uncooked foods. Whereas carnivorous animals have short intestines so their food can be expelled quickly, before fermentation takes place, we have very long intestines (36 feet in length) and our food should take eighteen hours to pass through the body. Because well cooked vegetarian food is less likely to ferment, and we can keep it in our intestines for a full eighteen hours, it is the best for the human digestive tract.

Of course, this is not to say that people who take a non-vegetarian diet cannot awaken their kundalini, as history indicates otherwise. There have been many Christian, Tibetan and Sufi saints who awakened their kundalini although they took a meat diet. And we can't say what Christ, Moses, Mohammed and Buddha ate because we haven't seen. However, from scientific observations made in the event of kundalini awakening, we know what is likely to occur in our body. At certain periods we may not be able to digest raw foods and there may be days when the body cannot even accept water. Therefore, during the period of kundalini awakening, please take a diet which can be easily assimilated and eat the bare minimum for existence. Do not live to eat, but eat to live.

The essence of food

The food we eat is not merely to satisfy our taste. Every food item has an essence in it, and in yoga we call this sattva. Sattva means the ultimate essence of food, but please do not mistake this for vitamins or minerals. Sattva is the more subtle form of food. When you eat for the sake of taste or enjoyment, instead of attaining the sattva you only get the gross things. That is why the yogis and saints of all traditions have always lived on the minimum possible food during periods of sadhana.

When we overeat we create a burden for the digestive system, and when the digestive system is overburdened we are unable to extract the sattva from the food. Sattva is a substance which nourishes the thoughts and nervous system. When the thoughts are fed with sattva they are more refined and pure, and one is able to live in higher consciousness. Therefore, it is beneficial for a sadhaka to fast from time to time. When the body is kept light and pure it is far more capable of extracting the sattva from food.

The use of condiments

In the diet for kundalini aspirants, condiments have a very important role to play. Condiments such as coriander, cumin seeds, tumeric, aniseed, black pepper, green pepper, cayenne, cloves, mustard seed, cardamom, cinnamon and so on are also called digestives as they aid digestion. These substances are not spices for taste; they are condiments which have the same properties as the enzymes in the body, and by helping to break down the food for digestion, they conserve vital energy and help to maintain the body's internal temperature.

When we talk about diet, let us not talk about it in terms of puritanism. We must remember only one thing in this case, to be sure the body is capable of digesting all the food. Having made a thorough study of natural foods and having tried them on myself, I have come to the conclusion that a combination of natural and macrobiotic foods is best. I have also discovered that instead of cooking the food in your stomach, it is best to cook it properly in the pan. Five or six condiments should be added during cooking to liberate the enzymes and chemicals which enhance digestion. The combination of heat, condiments and enzymes breaks down the food into smaller and more basic components, thus making it easier to digest.

Yoga and diet are independent sciences

Although diet is an independent science, it is definitely related to every system of yoga. Of course the ideal diet varies from yoga to yoga. A hatha yogi practising shankhaprakshalana will not be able to eat lots of red peppers and black peppers or he'll die. The diet regime for a karma yogi, a bhakta yogi, raja yogi, hatha yogi and kriya yogi will not be the same.

A bhakta yogi can eat all types of sweets and confectionary, consume cheese, butter, milk, etc. and he can eat and eat because his metabolism is very fast. Similarly, a karma yogi can take cheese, coffee, raw foods or cooked food, and even a little bit of champagne, because he is working hard physically and his metabolism is also very fast. But in raja yoga and kundalini awakening, the metabolism becomes slow and you have to be very careful about your diet and how much you consume.

Over the years I have done a lot of work on food because I run ashrams where I have to manage all the affairs in relation to money, labor and the spiritual welfare of the ashram inmates. As it is not possible to provide different types of diets for the various aspirants of yoga, I have evolved two wonderful foods which suit everybody. One is for those who like rice and the other is for those who prefer wheat. You either cook the rice with dal (pulses such as lentils), vegetables and a few condiments, or you pound the wheat, add all the same ingredients to that and cook it well. I call this integrated kichari. You can add anything to it and it's alright. This is the cheapest and most nutritious of all the foods I have eaten in any part of the world. You can also eat as much kichari as you want without any fear, because it digests so smoothly. This diet is suitable for all yoga practitioners and it is ideal for those who are ranging high in spiritual life and are about to merge into the ultimate state.

For one who is serious about yoga and spiritual aspirations, diet is as important as yoga, but if you are only worried about your diet and are not practising yoga, then you are a fanatic.

Chapter 8

Risks and Precautions

The awakening of kundalini is a very important, pleasant and historical experience in the life of man. If you can see and experience something more than what you can generally see and experience through your senses, you are indeed fortunate. But at the same time, if you have such experiences without adequate preparation, you may be startled, frightened and confused. Therefore, before the actual awakening of kundalini occurs, it is better to experience some mild awakenings in the chakras first.

Nowadays, if you travel by motor car at a very high speed, you do not really feel anything unusual, but if a man did it a hundred years ago when there was no adaptation to speed, he would have felt very giddy. Similarly, if a sudden awakening takes place and you are not used to the experience, you may become disoriented. You will not be able to cope with the radical changes in perception or with the contents of the unconscious mind welling up into the consciousness. But if you have been practising hatha yoga and meditation, and have experienced slight awakenings previously, you will be better able to cope with it.

When the body in totality is purified by the practices of shatkarmas and hatha yoga, when the mind is purified by mantra, when the pranas are brought under control through the practices of pranayama and the diet is pure and yogic, at that

time, awakening of kundalini takes place without any danger or accident. But with those who are in a hurry to awaken kundalini and who take to any practice in a haphazard manner without going through the preliminaries, and who do not take care of their diet, there will be some problems because they do not know how to control and utilize the fantastic energy they are unleashing.

The question of risk

There are so many whispers about the dangers of awakening and dark hints about people going crazy or developing disturbing powers. But everything in life is risky and there are far more dangers in ordinary daily life than you will encounter on the path of kundalini. Every time you walk across the street or travel by car or plane, you take a risk. In the pursuit of desires, passions and ambitions, people take great risks every day without thinking twice about it. Yet they allow the relatively minor risks of kundalini to deter them from pursuing the supreme goal of higher consciousness.

When a woman discovers she is pregnant, does she think it might be dangerous for her to have a child? She might die! She may have to have a cesarian! She may lose her figure for life! She may become seriously ill! Does a woman think like this and decide she doesn't want a child at all? No. Then why to think like this about kundalini?

Awakening of kundalini is the birth of Christ, Krishna, Buddha or Mohammed. It is one of the greatest events of human life, just as for a mother, to have a baby is one of the major and happiest events of her life, no matter what the consequences. In the same way, awakening of kundalini is one of the greatest events in the life of a yogi. It is the destiny of mankind, so why not go ahead with it?

Without involving yourself in a risk, nothing great in life can be achieved. Every great yogi, scientist, explorer and adventurer has faced risks. And so he has invented, discovered or made progress. Those people who are thinking and talking about risks are cowards, and such people should not even practise yoga. It is better that they eat, drink, be merry and die unenlightened.

Kundalini practices are certainly no more dangerous than many of the activities people engage in for the sake of thrills, sport or altered states of consciousness. The risks are not nearly as great as those associated with LSD, hashish, marijuana and alcohol, which are commonly used by many people in their everyday life. Those who practise kundalini yoga are assured of attaining states of expanded consciousness which are safer, smoother, more comprehensible and longer lasting than anything that can be obtained through the use of psychedelics.

The science of kundalini yoga has its own inbuilt safety mechanisms. If you perform asanas or pranayama incorrectly, nature will immediately send a warning and compel you to stop practising. In the same way, when kundalini awakening takes place and you are not prepared to face it, nature puts obstacles in your way. If ever you become scared and want to stop the process of kundalini awakening, all you have to do is revert to a gross lifestyle. Just revise all your passions, dreams and worldly ambitions.

Unless you are an extremely introverted person, you can proceed along the path of kundalini yoga without fear. If you are hypersensitive, have difficulty communicating with others and live within a sort of fantasy world, you will find kundalini yoga upsetting and even dangerous. Such people should not practise kundalini yoga or any techniques for exploring the inner world until they have developed the ability to strike fearlessly and confidently through the outer world. This also applies to timid and dependent people. For all these individuals, karma yoga is the way. They should lead a life of unselfish service in the world and develop non-attachment and maximum awareness.

Fear of mistakes

Some people worry about kundalini ascending through the wrong nadi, but there is no danger here, because if kundalini enters through any other nadi, the whole circuit will fuse. If kundalini has awakened but a chakra is blocked, say swadhisthana, then kundalini will only roam about in mooladhara and all the instincts of that chakra will develop. You will become a high class animal for a while and may develop some siddhis. If there is any obstruction in the chakras beyond that, the energy will be blocked for a long time, affecting the psychological constitution. And if kundalini enters into the pranic nadi, pingala, it could set the whole brain into turmoil. However, this doesn't usually happen. Nature intervenes, and unless sushumna is clear, the chakra will not open and the energy will not be able to move further.

Mistakes do occur, but not in average individuals, because they are scared of something wrong happening somewhere. If they are practising and suddenly they feel they're going crazy, they will discontinue their practices immediately. So, every individual possesses a sort of fear. Before anything wrong can happen totally, man takes care of himself. However, there are some blockheads and very stuffy people who plod on no matter what happens. They don't care about the consequences and these are the people who generally get themselves into trouble.

Kundalini awakening and illness

If you take care of all the requirements, then no illness will come to you. However, many people are very hasty and impatient. When they want to make money, they want to make it overnight, quickly, and the same psychology is transferred into spiritual life; quick money and quick realization. With this impatience, sometimes we overstep the necessary prerequisites.

Some people develop weakness of the lower limbs because they have not trained their body through hatha yoga. Some people develop digestive disorders because they have not understood the relationship between food and the temperature of the body. Therefore, the prerequisites have to be observed. Those who suffer do so not because of the kundalini awakening, but because they have not harmonized the nervous system.

Through hatha yoga you must create a balance between the two forces in the physical body, the pranic and the mental. Even in modern times we say that a balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems is absolutely essential to develop the higher faculties of the brain. When there is an imbalance between these two forces, that is, if one is predominant, the other is subservient, then you are supplying one energy in excess and the other energy is deficient. This inevitably leads to sickness.

Airing the unconscious

In the course of your practices there may be isolated awakenings in ajna chakra, in which the awareness enters the realms of the unconscious mind and you see figures, symbols and even monsters or benevolent beings. You may hear or experience many inexplicable things, but they are all simply products of your own unconscious mind and should be regarded as nothing more. With the awakening of psychic consciousness, the symbols belonging to your own personality come out. When this happens you may have a problem understanding, but just remember, these kinds of expressions are simply parts of your being which have been lying in reserve and they have to 'come out for airing'.

You should not be afraid of kundalini awakening but you must be prepared for the events that may occur. Otherwise, if you have a weak mind and are confronted by fear, it could lead to mental derangement. So, before you attempt kundalini awakening you should undergo a process of thought purification and develop understanding of your way of thinking.

When the prerequisites for kundalini awakening are followed properly, psychological and psycho-emotional symptoms do not occur. In fact, all these things happen before the actual event of kundalini awakening. But of course, when the awakening takes place, if the aspirant is not maintaining the proper discipline that is required, he is bound to get into some psychological cobwebs.

The awakening of kundalini should never be equated with obsessions or neurosis. When an explosion takes place it brings out whatever was in you. If you have a personality full of obsessions and mental blocks, that's going to explode. Therefore, before one attempts awakening of kundalini, he must have arrived at a point of purity of consciousness or clarity of mind, *chitta shuddhi*.

Purity of consciousness is not a religious terminology. You may have pure thoughts in your mind but you may not be pure at all. You may be thinking about purity, chastity, compassion, charity and generosity, but in the subterranean plane of your personality there may be conflicts or other unresolved mental problems. When the mind enters into meditation or samadhi, this subterranean level comes up to the surface. You begin to see all the debris and you feel it and enact it. This can happen at any time, when you're dreaming, when you are in a state of craziness and when kundalini is waking.

That is why a relentless effort should be made to render the mind free from all the disturbing archetypes or samskaras before you try to handle this project. An

integration of karma, bhakti and raja yoga, tempered with hatha and gyana yoga, must be adopted first.

Purity and impurity

Although I recommend chitta shuddhi, I know that many people have an obsession about purity and impurity. They keep thinking they are impure and therefore they shouldn't try to awaken kundalini. But when the sun rises, what happens to the darkness? Purity and impurity are ethical and moral concepts created by society and religion. Awakening of kundalini is awakening of the great light in man. It rises like the sun, and when it can be seen on the horizon there will be no darkness, no pain, suffering, disappointment or impurity.

Siddhis and the ego factor

When one has been practising kundalini yoga for a couple of years and suddenly he starts having beautiful experiences, he tends to think he is superior to everybody else and may even consider himself as godly. To protect yourself from this, you must place yourself in the caliber of chela or disciple. A disciple remains a disciple, there is no promotion for him. Many people think that after twelve years of discipleship they will be promoted to guruhood, but this is not so.

In the path of kundalini yoga it is very important that you live the life of a disciple even after the awakening of kundalini, and not only after that, but even when Shiva and Shakti have united.

Kundalini yoga is the means for attaining supreme awareness and enlightenment, but if you get lost in the beauty of kundalini, you may not reach enlightenment. When at a certain stage the mind becomes very efficient and siddhis such as telepathy, clairvoyance, hypnotism, spiritual healing, etc. manifest, some aspirants take that to be a divine accomplishment and begin to think 'Now I am God.' Then, in the name of good to everybody, they start doing all sorts of funny magic. This feeds the ego, and in the course of time, their ignorance becomes very great.

There is extreme danger here and many aspirants get caught. Their ego becomes tremendously gross and they develop a strong feeling of grandeur. And that's as far as they get. Although there is nothing really wrong with psychic powers, those who seek them must know that they can completely destroy their spiritual consciousness if they are not disciplined. You can become lost in these powers just as some people get lost in money, beauty, intellect and so on. These parapsychological attainments are momentary; they live with you for only a short period of time and then you lose them. They are only additional properties to be experienced and left behind in the wake of the dawning of supreme awareness.

It is important to remember what Patanjali has said in the Yoga Sutras - "All these psychic manifestations are obstacles which block the free flow of consciousness towards samadhi."

Two opposing forces

In the realms of higher consciousness, there are both divine and demonical forces. Both these forces can be brought down to earth by the same techniques. Without higher awareness, when the awakening of the chakras begins, the knowledge and destructive energy of the atom bomb might be unleashed rather than the wisdom and spiritual power of the rishis. When kundalini awakens in a person with no dispassion and discrimination, who does not seek liberation and does not know the reality of this world, the consequences can be disastrous. Ultimately, that person will destroy himself, and possibly many others in the process.

Therefore, a kundalini aspirant must constantly work towards the development of higher awareness. To be conscious of the unconscious is very difficult. When your awareness is heavy and burdened with tension and confusion, it cannot survive for long in the unconscious state. But when your consciousness is light and clear, it can penetrate into the unconscious like a sharp and speedy arrow, successfully navigating past all the danger zones and emerging with higher knowledge.

Anyone who has the urge to expand his or her awareness is a pioneer. In this we are emerging from the confines of a mental prison in which the human race has been incarcerated for millennia. It is the privilege of each one of us to participate in this historic adventure, and we must be prepared for any eventuality. Kundalini yoga, if practised with dedication, patience and appropriate guidance, is the safest and most pleasant way of awakening that can ever take place in our lives.

With the awakening of kundalini, life becomes smooth. Plans and projects become clear, decisions become accurate, and the personality becomes dynamic and powerful. Therefore, do not be afraid of any risk. Once the awakening takes place, all your limitations will be overcome, because darkness can never exist in the face of light and limitations can never exist in the face of kundalini.

Chapter 9

Kundalini and Madness

Many individuals who experience the awakening of kundalini behave in a peculiar way; they think in a different style or pattern. They may see auras and visions, feel peculiar in the body, hear strange sounds and talk all sorts of nonsense. In society our brains are structured in a certain way; there is discipline and control which inhibit us from expressing ourselves freely. When the awakening of kundalini takes place, this conditioning is withdrawn and the lid is completely lifted from the mind. That is why the actions and words of those people who are undergoing kundalini awakening appear so nonsensical, deviant and oftentimes mad to the ordinary man.

During kundalini awakening and madness, people may manifest the same symptoms, but on closer examination a difference can be detected. Similarly, if you film a man laughing out of madness and a man laughing with his friends, they will

look almost the same, but they are different. Most of us have probably read stories about the avadhoots and fakirs of India and the Sufi and Christian mystics. Externally, these God-intoxicated ones looked crazy, but if you were with them, they would have appeared and proved to be very clear. The inner consciousness of such people is absolutely lucid, organized and disciplined.

A great misunderstanding

Mystics throughout the ages have been persecuted for their experiences, which to the normal mundane consciousness are insanity, yet to the sage are ecstasy. Socrates was poisoned because he did not behave normally. Christ was crucified on the cross because his teachings were not understood. Al-Hallaj, the Sufi saint, was skinned alive because he spoke the truth without fear of the society, Joan of Arc and the witches of Salem were burned at the stake, as were many others. All have been persecuted and harassed by the mundane populace for their vision, which arose as a result of inner work. Due to this lack of understanding, many of the esoteric doctrines were hidden from the majority of people.

Of course, this was long ago. We live in a more enlightened world today, far from the barbarous atrocities of the past, or do we? War and poverty still exist, as do insanity and madness. People who are shown to be crazy, relative to the norms of our society, are locked up until they are 'better'. Yet, by what criteria are they judged insane? How do we know the difference between insanity and the ecstasy of enlightenment? Is it by the superficial external appearances that we sense with our limited sensory apparatus, or is it by some deeper inner fear that we are motivated to judge others insane because they do not behave like the majority? Some of the people in the west who are locked up as insane would be recognized in the east as having undergone higher spiritual experiences. Therefore, it is now up to science to determine some definite, concrete and reliable ways to differentiate between the broken, insane mind and the opening, enlightened mind.

Spiritual experiences in the east and west

Knowledge of the spiritual experience has been lost in the west. During the last few centuries, many unfortunate people whose kundalini had awakened were sent to mental hospitals and given drugs, electric shocks and other inappropriate treatments. The scientists and doctors believed that the awakening was an abnormal kind of behavior, and no one was able to accept or handle it, not even the person's immediate family or closest friends. That is why, in the last two hundred years, there have been so few great personalities in the west; they have all been committed to mental hospitals or they have remained quiet to avoid that fate.

In India the situation is quite different. There, when an individual expresses some abnormal symptoms, makes some very peculiar gestures or speaks of extraordinary dreams, it is understood that he is experiencing events beyond the mind. The Hindu belief is that the consciousness is not the finished product of nature, but is subject to evolution, and between one state of being and the next, there is a crisis. And when strange symptoms occur in someone, they believe he is experiencing that crisis and

that his consciousness is undergoing evolution. If a child's total personality is devoted to God and he can experience things beyond the mind, then his whole family is purified and such a child is universally respected.

A spiritual awakening or madness?

Though the process of spiritual awakening usually occurs without incident or interruption, it may happen that blockages and impurities in the body create symptoms which mimic various neurological and psychiatric conditions. These problems necessitate careful diagnosis to differentiate kundalini arousal and pathology.

It is actually very simple to distinguish between a mental or psychic phenomenon and a mental sickness, however much the symptoms may overlap: mental illness never develops in people who are free from conflict. If a person is undergoing a problem in his personal life, perhaps due to a death, loss of property or emotional breakdown, psychotic behavior can develop. Fantasies can take form and one's own psychological volition can manifest in the form of psychic energy. On the other hand, if there are no conflicts, anxieties or strong crosscurrents in a person's life, he cannot possibly have any mental disease. Suppose you have no apparent problems, no personal or social difficulties, but still you are having some strange suprasensual experiences. In a case like this, there should be no doubt about what is taking place.

A mad person doesn't have a constant and consistent flow of experience and his awareness is very dissipated. He is both disorganized externally and completely blinded internally. On the other hand, the awareness of a person who is awakened is constant and consistent. Whereas a person with an awakened consciousness can make accurate decisions and judgements, a crazy person cannot. Madness and spiritual awakening may both be characterized by a certain lack of control, but the spiritually awakened person is guided by a higher consciousness while the mad person is not.

When some suprasensual experience is taking place, it is important to consult an experienced person who has knowledge of illumination and also knows about madness. A guru can make the correct judgement and determine whether the brain has begun a process of regression or is actually progressing along transcendental lines. If there is some organic damage in the brain, it can be treated, but if the symptoms are spiritual, the person is initiated and given something to practise so his behavior is streamlined. He will not be forced into married life or any other social roles which are unsuitable for him. Instead, he will be exposed to saintly personalities and teachings.

If this type of guidance and support for the experience is not obtained, it is very easy to end up in a mental hospital, or even a prison. However, scientists are now broadening their description of the spectrum of human behavior and they are discovering that behavior can be psychic or spiritual in origin as well as psychological or physical. Everybody should understand one very important point. Awakening of kundalini should never be equated with abnormal psychological behavior because awakening of kundalini is a process of jumping out of the mind.

Chapter 10

Four Forms of Awakening

When we talk about awakening we should not confuse awakening of kundalini with other forms of awakening. Awakening of the chakras is completely different from awakening of kundalini. Awakening of sushumna is also quite a different event, and awakening of mooladhara chakra is not awakening of kundalini. Even if all the chakras from mooladhara up to ajna are awakened this does not mean that kundalini is awakened.

In the systematic process of awakening kundalini, the first step is to purify ida and pingala nadis and create harmony in their functioning. Next, all the chakras have to be awakened. Then sushumna nadi is awakened, and when there is a clear pathway for its ascent, kundalini can be awakened.

If the first three steps have been taken, awakening of kundalini will only have positive effects. But if they have been neglected and kundalini awakens, there will definitely be some negative results. Supposing you have awakened kundalini before sushumna awakening has taken place, then the shakti will not find a channel towards Shiva. It will remain obstructed in mooladhara chakra and will create tremendous sexual and neurotic problems. This is a negative result because you wanted to unite with Shiva and have higher experiences, whereas now you are experiencing the grosser things. And if the chakras are not awakened before kundalini, the shakti will get blocked in one of the chakras and remain stagnant, possibly for years. Some siddhis may develop and you may not be able to transcend them at all. This is also a negative effect.

Each form of awakening has its own psychic potential. Every nerve and fiber of your body is psychic; it is capable of producing psychic manifestations. There is a possibility of awakening the entire physical body. Every cell of the body is one individual. You are the macro-cosmic body for that microcosmic individual.

Step I: Disciplining ida and pingala

Ida and pingala nadis are responsible for the mundane existence. Pingala conducts the life that is in your body and ida conducts the consciousness. These two nadis respectively feed the two hemispheres of the brain which in turn control every activity of the body. It is not awakening of these nadis we aim towards, but discipline. As you know, ida and pingala function alternately and directly influence the temperature of the body, digestive and hormonal secretions, the brainwaves and all the bodily systems.

Ida and pingala function according to a natural cycle, but on account of poor eating habits and inharmonious lifestyles, the natural cycle is often disturbed. Sometimes one nadi predominates and the other is suppressed. This leads to mental and physical imbalances and generally results in disease. Therefore, ida and pingala

must be disciplined or made to function according to the laws of nature. Only when there is harmony between these two nadis can sushumna be awakened.

So, through the practices of hatha yoga, pranayama and raja yoga, the nadis should be purified and disciplined. The best practice for this is actually nadi shodhana pranayama - nadi purifying pranayama.

Step 2: Awakening the chakras

From incarnation to incarnation the yoga we have been practising may have already awakened the lower chakras. Although most of us try to awaken mooladhara, swadhisthana, etc. it may not be necessary to awaken them because we may have evolved even beyond manipura on account of our efforts in a previous life. It is even possible that kundalini may have ascended through the chakras but you don't know it because you haven't noticed any symptoms. However, in any case, it is essential that all the chakras must be awakened before we make an attempt to awaken sushumna.

If the chakras are not purified, then purification of the nadis will not serve any purpose. If the electrical junctions are not connected or properly organized, even if you have the best wiring available, how will the electrical energy be distributed? The chakras are the junctions from which the nadis, like cables, transmit the energy to different parts of the body.

Every point, speck or fiber of the body is directly related to one of the chakras. If you experience pain in any part of the body, the sensation will go to the chakra related to that particular area. This means your whole body is connected with one of the chakras. For example, the urinary, excretory and reproductive systems are fed by swadhisthana chakra. Besides this, the sexual organs are connected to mooladhara chakra. The digestive system, small intestine, large intestine, appendix, pancreas, duodenum, stomach and liver are all connected to manipura chakra. The heart and lungs are fed by anahata chakra.

However, in most people, the chakras beyond manipura are dormant. Because mooladhara chakra is the highest chakra in animal evolution, it is already functioning in most people. That is why everybody has a very acute sexual awareness and sex has become one of the most important events in man's life. Therefore, most of our social traditions are based upon this particular human requirement. The mere fact that today's society is utilizing the five tattwas of tantra (meat, fish, wine, grain and sexual interaction) in everyday life means that in most people, kundalini is somewhere between mooladhara and swadhisthana. Once kundalini leaves swadhisthana and ascends to manipura and anahata, you no longer need the five tattwas.

If you are stuck in mooladhara or swadhisthana, you will need to purify the higher chakras and bring them into operation. There are many ways of doing it. For those who are strong in mind, there are some higher practices. By concentration on bhrumadhya you can awaken one chakra, by the practice of uddiyana bandha you can awaken another, by practising mantra, your mantra or any bija mantra, you can awaken almost all the chakras one by one, and as a result of this awakening, you

can have very good psychic experiences which you can easily handle. In my opinion, it is safer to awaken the chakras by the mild methods.

The asanas are intended to create mild awakening in the chakras. For example, sarvangasana will awaken vishuddhi, matsyasana will awaken anahata and bhujangasana will awaken swadhisthana. By awakening the chakras mildly, you will not have any jolting experiences. Sometimes, when a chakra awakens suddenly, you can have the experience of lower lives. This means you can be assailed by fear, anxiety, greed, passion, depression, etc.

Each chakra is symbolized by a certain animal, indicating a type of animal consciousness, and if sudden awakening of a chakra takes place, you may exhibit some of the animal emotions in either a mild or very strong way. For instance, fear is not a human emotion, nor is infatuation or violence. Of course, man is trying to expel the animal from him, but at the same time he is maintaining it. Therefore, care must be taken not to give an explosive manifestation to the awakening of the chakras.

Step 3: Awakening sushumna

In order to purify and awaken sushumna, a lot of work has to be done and you must be ready to cope with experiences that are more intense than those associated with chakra awakening. These experiences are beyond logic. They are not even real and they cannot be explained or properly understood. If the chakras are awakened, ida and pingala are balanced and the other nadis are also purified, but there is an obstruction in sushumna, then the awakening of kundalini will not fulfil its purpose.

Actually, I don't believe ida and pingala nadis are inferior to sushumna. Awakening of pingala nadi will awaken one portion of the brain and awakening of ida will awaken another portion. However, when kundalini enters sushumna, it affects the whole brain.

In the ancient texts of tantra it has been clearly indicated that it does not matter if kundalini enters another passageway. If there is an awakening in pingala, one becomes a healer or a *siddha*, one who has control over nature, matter and the mind. When there is awakening in ida, one can predict things; he becomes a prophet. But when sushumna awakens, kundalini ascends straight to sahasrara and one becomes a *jivanmukta*, a liberated soul.

So, hatha yoga and pranayama are prescribed for the awakening of sushumna. There are also other ways, but kriya yoga is the best, particularly the practices of maha mudra and maha bheda mudra. For awakening of sushumna, ida and pingala have to be suppressed. Thus you can see the importance of practising kumbhaka, breath retention. When both nadis are suppressed in kumbhaka, immediately after you'll find that both nadis are flowing simultaneously. It is at this time that kundalini should awaken.

Chapter 11

The Descent of Kundalini

Everybody talks about the ascent of kundalini, but few ever discuss the descent. When the descent of kundalini occurs, it means the lower mental plane of the human being is no longer influenced by the ordinary mind, the supermind takes over instead. This higher form of consciousness rules the body, mind and senses and directs your life, thoughts and emotions. Kundalini is henceforth the ruler of your life. That is the concept of descent.

The whole process after union

When Shiva and Shakti unite in sahasrara, one experiences samadhi, illumination occurs in the brain and the silent areas begin to function. Shiva and Shakti remain merged together for some time, and during this period there is a total loss of consciousness pertaining to each other. At that time a bindu evolves. Bindu means a point, a drop, and that bindu is the substratum of the whole cosmos. Within that bindu is the seat of human intelligence and the seat of the total creation. Then the bindu splits into two and Shiva and Shakti manifest again in duality. When ascension took place it was only the ascent of Shakti, but now, when descension takes place, Shiva and Shakti both descend to the gross plane and there is again knowledge of duality.

Those who have studied quantum physics will have a better understanding of this as it is difficult for everyone to understand from the philosophical point of view. After total union there is a process of coming down the same pathway you ascended. The gross consciousness which became fine, again becomes gross. That is the concept of divine incarnation or avatara.

The non-dual experience of samadhi

When one attains the highest pinnacles of samadhi, purusha and prakriti, or Shiva and Shakti are in total union and only *adwaita* exists, non-dual experience. At this time, when there is no subject/object plus distinction, it is very difficult for one to differentiate. He may look like an idiot and not know it, or he may appear to be a great scholar and not be aware of that. Whether he is talking to a man or a woman he does not know, he sees no difference. He may even be associating with spiritual or divine people without being aware of that, because at this point of time his consciousness is reduced to a level of innocence just like a baby.

So, in the state of samadhi you are a baby. A baby can't tell the difference between a man and a woman because he has no physical or sexual distinction. He can't distinguish a scholar from an idiot and he may not even see any difference between a snake and a rope. He can hold a snake just as he holds a rope. This only happens when union is taking place.

When Shiva and Shakti descend to the gross plane, that is mooladhara chakra, they separate and live as two entities. There is duality in mooladhara chakra. There is duality in the mind and senses and in the world of names and forms, but there is no duality in samadhi. There is no seer or experiencer in the state of samadhi. There is nobody to say what samadhi is like because it is a non-dual experience.

Why Shiva and Shakti both descend

It is very difficult to understand why Shiva and Shakti both descend to the gross plane after having attained the highest union. What is the use of destroying the world and then creating it again? What is the point of transcending the consciousness if you have to come back to it again? Why bother to awaken kundalini and unite with Shiva in sahasrara if you have to come down to mooladhara again? This is something very mysterious and we can well ask, 'Why awaken kundalini at all?'

Why build a mansion if you know you will have to burn it down when it is completed? We actually create a lot of things that are ultimately going to be destroyed. So why do it at all? It seems so crazy! We do so much sadhana to transcend the chakras and ascend from earth to heaven. Then, when we reach paradise and become one with that great reality, we suddenly decide to come back down. And not all alone, we bring the great one with us. It would be easier to understand if Shakti came back alone and Shiva remained in heaven. Maybe when Shakti is about to leave, Shiva says, 'Wait, I'm coming with you.'

A new existence on the gross plane

When kundalini descends, you come down to the gross plane with a totally transformed consciousness. You live a normal life, associating with everybody and discharging your worldly obligations like other people do. Maybe you even play the game of desires, passions, cravings and such things. Maybe you play the game of victory and defeat, attachments and infatuations, but you just play a game. You know it; you do everything as an actor. You are not involved in it life and soul.

It is at this time the genius or the transformed consciousness manifests through you. You don't have to think or plan how to perform miracles. You have to remember that you have come down as a transformed quality of consciousness. You must remember that you are now connected with those areas of the brain which were previously silent. And you must also remember that you are linked with those reservoirs of knowledge, power and wisdom which belong to the realm of the higher cosmos.

Until the descent is complete, such a man lives a very simple life, unnoticed and unattended. Once the descent is complete he begins to play the game and people recognize him as a divine incarnation. They see he is something special compared to everybody else and they call him a guru. Such a person is actually a junior god.

Dealing with the issues of reality

When Shiva and Shakti descend to the gross level of awareness there is again duality. That is why the self-realized man is able to understand pain and all the mundane affairs of life. He understands the whole drama of duality, multiplicity and diversity. Sometimes we ordinary mortals are at a fix to understand how this man with the highest attainment is able to cope with the hopeless dualities of life.

When I was about thirteen, I was also puzzled by this. There was a great lady saint who was supposed to have attained the very highest state and I used to visit her with my elders. I used to hear her discussing all the mundane and ordinary things of life - "How are you? How is your child? Is he sick? Are you giving him medicines? Why do you fight with your wife?" I used to think, "If she is an enlightened lady she shouldn't talk about duality. How can she understand duality if she is in unity?"

I never got an answer, but every man has his moments of experience in life and I have not been an exception to that. I came to understand that Shiva and Shakti live on both planes and this gross plane of duality is an expression and manifestation of the correlation of Shiva and Shakti. This is precisely the reason why the great saints and mahatmas talk about charity, compassion, love, etc. However, there is a period when they don't understand these things and they don't care what happens to the world. They don't even know what is going on, who is happy and who is suffering. But finally there is a great transformation. Shakti rules the matter and Shiva rules the consciousness, and when they descend to the gross plane, Shakti continues to rule the matter and Shiva, being consciousness, gives an understanding to the whole world.

Therefore, if ever we see a self-realized person discussing the trivialities of life and dealing with the issues of reality, we should not be surprised.

Chapter 12

The Experiences of Awakening

The awakening of kundalini is like a great explosion which transports a person into another plane of being. No matter which spiritual path you follow, you must eventually reach this domain. Ordinary consciousness and transcendental consciousness cannot be maintained at the same time; it is necessary to pass through an intermediate zone of change, where perceptions, feelings and experiences undergo a transformation. The adventure is always the same; it is a journey through the border region between the known and the unknown. At this time it is very important to recognize that this explosion signals a profound alteration in consciousness. The complete process of awakening is comprised of several stages, as the kundalini rises and passes through the various chakras. It takes quite some time to become fully stabilized, but if one has a good understanding, the transition process can be managed without any serious difficulties.

The preliminary awakening of kundalini is followed by the experience of light in *bhrumadhya*, the eyebrow center. Usually this develops in a very mild way over an extended period of time, and therefore does not precipitate any sudden agitation or disturbance. After some time, the appetite for food and sleep gradually decreases and the mind becomes quieter.

There is another prior warning which heralds the awakening of kundalini. In yoga and tantra it is very clearly indicated that when *ida* and *pingala* flow simultaneously for a long period of time, and *sushumna* begins to flow, then it is time to prepare for a spiritual event.

Therefore, one should be conversant with *swara yoga*, the science of the breath cycle, and keep a close watch over the breathing process. The breathing pattern in the nostrils normally changes every fourth day, according to the cycles of the moon, but when both nostrils have been functioning equally well for at least fifteen days, that is an advance warning of an impending spiritual breakthrough.

An onslaught of experiences

When the actual awakening occurs there is an explosion in the realm of experience and there are symptoms which are sometimes very difficult to understand. The most unique and common experience is the release of energy like an electric shock from the bottom of the spinal cord, as if it were connected to an electrical power point. This may be accompanied by a burning sensation in *mooladhara chakra* and energy passing up and down through *sushumna*. Sometimes you hear drums, flutes, bells, birds, celestial music, or you may even think you can hear peacocks singing. You may have a very momentary sensation of sitting outside in the middle of a monsoon shower, and there can also be the sensation of dark clouds in continual movement overhead and the sound of thunder.

At times your body feels so light and you may even visualize your spinal cord as a fluorescent light. It is common to feel illumination within, as if hundreds of little lights were burning inside your body. This is one side.

The other side is that all the anger, passions and suppressions come out. Sometimes you are so filled with fear that you can't sleep, sometimes for days together you have nothing in your mind but sex, at other times you can't think of anything but food. However, all these symptoms pass within a few days or weeks.

Some people obtain psychic powers. They develop clairvoyance, telepathy, clairaudience, psychotelekinisis, the ability to heal, etc., and this brings a lot of temptations. However, this is a phase and it will pass away.

Sometimes you don't feel like eating for days together. You may not have any appetite for fifteen to twenty days, and even if people try to force you to eat, you just can't. There is sometimes a feeling of nervous depression, and you may just want to sit, or you may feel restricted and closed in. There is a detachment from the normal emotions of life; for days together you may live a life of utter dispassion. Nothing is interesting in life and everything and everybody seems as dry as a desert. But at the same time, the mind becomes very dynamic and appears to be formless.

Various sensations, poetic emotions and artistic perceptions also occur, such as visions of angels and divinities. All kinds of things can emerge from the depths of the mind. However, these are just a few of the symptoms you may experience, but all of them pass away quickly.

The storm always settles and then the yogi lives a very normal life. Externally his life seems the same as anybody else's but his inner awareness is far greater and more vast.

Headaches and insomnia

Some aspirants experience terrible headaches when kundalini is awakening, however, this does not mean that all headaches are related to kundalini. And not everybody will have headaches. Generally, those who have had married life do not have this experience. It is usually only those who have not had any kind of sexual interactions who experience headaches with the advent of kundalini awakening.

There is also another explanation about headaches. One-tenth of the brain is active and nine-tenths are not. In some cases, when the silent areas of the brain begin to wake up, the first symptom is headache. People have equated this experience with labor pain. Just as a woman experiences labor pain when she is about to give birth to a child, when the silent areas of the brain are about to become active and you are giving birth to spiritual consciousness, there is also pain.

Therefore, one has to bear with this pain for some time, but it will inevitably settle down. Of course you can reduce the pain by adjusting your diet and lifestyle, but under no circumstances should you use sedatives, aspirins or pain relieving pills.

It is also likely that an aspirant will experience insomnia. However, yogis don't call it insomnia. They say, 'Why should I sleep?' If you love a person very much and he stays with you and does not allow you to sleep, will you call that insomnia? So, all the people who do not sleep are not yogis. Only those people are yogis who do not sleep and are happy about it, because yogis have an entirely different attitude. They say one-third of life is wasted in sleeping.

So, when kundalini awakens in a yogi and consciousness is constant and consistent, and there is no waking, sleeping and dreaming, they are very happy about it. Therefore, insomnia does not usually bother a person who has awakened kundalini. However, if you are disturbed by your inability to sleep, you should never resort to sleeping pills or tranquillizers. It is also not necessary that you practise yoga to induce sleep. Just accept your sleeplessness and enjoy it. You can do japa or meditation or just do some spiritual reflection. If this is not possible, just lie down and let it happen as it will.

Experiencing the threefold awakenings

Each of the three forms of awakening - nadis, chakras and sushurnna is

accompanied by its own set of experiences. Many aspirants have psychic experiences and they think they indicate the awakening of kundalini, but this is not so.

When the chakras are awakening, the experiences one has are not so frightening and critical. They are usually of a fantastic nature, very pleasant, hallucinating and comfortable. Even if you have an experience of fear or terror, it does not shake your mind. When we have experiences of our ishta devata or guru, or we have some experience in meditation or during kirtan, and it feels very nice, that represents chakra awakening and not kundalini awakening. When you experience a chakra awakening it is rather beautiful and leaves a comfortable or blissful feeling. That is to encourage you to go further.

When awakening takes place in sushumna, you may feel or see a rod of light, or your spinal cord may seem to be fully illumined from within. Such experiences are described by the saints of different religions in their poems, songs and stories, which are unfortunately understood by very few people today.

The awakening of sushumna can also bring some mind exploding experiences which are sometimes very confusing. You can smell pleasant and unpleasant odors, you will hear shrieks and screams as if the ghosts are crying, and there is a feeling of heat, creeping sensations and pain in different parts of the body. You may get a high fever or manifest the symptoms of some common disease or some baffling illness which medical experts find difficult to analyze.

At the time of sushumna awakening, the quality and experience of the mind begin to change. One has the experience of depression, anorexia and loneliness. You begin to realize the inner essence. Matter appears to be nothing, and even your body feels as if it were only made up of air. Or you may feel that you are not part of this physical body, you are someone else. When you look at people, animals and the objects of nature - the flowers, trees, rivers and mountains, etc., you feel a communication with them.

At this time, you also experience prophetic vision, but your visions or forewarnings may not be clear and you only foresee the bad things - imminent perils, accidents, disasters and catastrophies. Throughout the awakening one generally has an aversion to work and can't really apply himself to anything.

It is actually best if an aspirant is near his guru at this time of awakening so he can explain what is happening. The sadhaka is not merely making a transition from one state of mind to another, he is actually jumping from one state to another. It is also very difficult for even an expert guru to handle these matters unless the disciple has totally accepted him as his guru.

Differentiating the experiences

You must remember that when you have certain visions and fantastic experiences, they do not necessarily represent the awakening of kundalini or even sushumna nadi. They may indicate chakra awakening or they may just be the expression of your archetypes or samskaras. Because of your sadhana, concentration

or one-pointedness, you may be allowing an outlet for your deep-rooted samskaras to express themselves.

These experiences and those that accompany chakra awakening do not mean anything when you try to assess them. I will give you an example. Many years ago, I was meditating on the bank of the Ganga in Rishikesh and suddenly I had a very vivid experience. I saw the whole earth split into two. It was a very clear vision, and I remember it even today, but this vision had nothing to do with reality; I just had it. This was an experience of chakra awakening.

When the actual awakening of kundalini takes place, it is a great event in man's life. Every experience has a tangible proof, whether it is awakening of extrasensory perceptions or the awakening of a particular kind of genius. It may be in the form of a philosophy you are able to deliver to the people, a transformation in the physical elements of the body that you are able to materialize, or a magnetic influence that you are able to cast on the masses of people as a politician, musician or saint.

The awakening of kundalini has tangible, positive and concrete proofs. You cannot believe your kundalini is awakened if you have no proof, because when the awakening of kundalini takes place, you completely transcend the normal categories of mental awareness and the scope of your knowledge becomes greater.

A scientist who jumped beyond the mind

There was a scientist named Eddington, and he was observing the determined laws of electrons and trying to formulate a system, a law. He succeeded, the result being the law of determinancy.

However, once when he was studying the electrons, his vision changed entirely. He found that the electrons were behaving in a very anarchical manner. There was no logic, system or hypothesis behind their behavior. That was his vision, and he called it the law of indeterminacy.

Once he was asked, 'What is this law which you have discovered behind the mathematical and logical behavior of electrons?' He replied, 'It cannot be explained.' Someone asked, 'How can you say that a movement in matter cannot be explained?' Eddington answered, 'It can be explained if you can jump over the mind.'

The process of transition

There is a natural process of transition in which a man's consciousness evolves over the course of millions of years. It takes place in the same way that a baby develops into a child, a child into a young man, a young man into a middle-aged man, a middle-aged man into an old man. Suppose a child of five suddenly transformed into an old man and he found he was tall, grey haired and speaking like an old person. It would be very difficult for him to handle the situation and to connect both the areas of his life. This is what generally happens with those who awaken kundalini.

Their experiences are often imbalanced and extremely difficult to understand. Just imagine how it would be if you felt your whole body burning as if it were in flames, or you kept feeling that a snake was crawling through your body. Imagine what it would be like to look at somebody's face and instead of seeing the person you see a ghost. You'd start to think you were crazy! These are just a few of the bizarre experiences you could be confronted with. However, with the awakening of kundalini, there is also an awakening of *vairagya*, detachment. And when *vairagya* develops the turbulence settles, the awakening becomes peaceful and the transition is smooth.

Chapter 13

The Path of Kriya Yoga

Awakening of kundalini is very difficult. You can try the various yogic and religious practices that have evolved throughout the ages, but they require a lot of self-discipline and demanding austerities. There are so many do's and don't's that the average person finds unpalatable. Therefore, the rishis of the tantric tradition evolved a series of practices that could be easily adopted by every type of aspirant regardless of his lifestyle, habits, beliefs, and so on. Of course there are many practices belonging to tantra, but of them all, kriya yoga is considered to be the most powerful and suitable for the modern day man who is enmeshed in this world.

For many years, knowledge of this system of yoga was revealed to very few. The practices were mentioned in the tantric texts, but they were never clearly defined. Through a tradition, the practices were handed down from guru to disciple. They were given to both householder and monastic disciples, who soon discovered that through these techniques, kundalini became a reality and a real experience in their lives.

The ultimate purpose of kriya yoga is to create awakening in the chakras, to purify the nadis, and finally, to awaken the kundalini shakti. The kriyas are intended to awaken the kundalini in stages and not abruptly. When kundalini awakens abruptly, the experiences you have are very difficult to handle and you cannot understand what is happening to you. The techniques of kriya yoga offer a smooth and relatively risk-free means of expanding your awareness and awakening the dormant areas of the brain. Also, this system of kriya yoga provides a means whereby you do not have to tackle the mind directly. Its practices are based on hatha yoga, which aims at controlling the prana. Mind and prana interact with each other and thereby, by controlling the prana, we can gain control of the mind.

Kriya yoga offers a unique approach

Kriya yoga means 'the yoga of practice, movement or action'. Unlike the various religious, mystical or yogic practices which demand mental control, the special

instruction in the system of kriya yoga is, 'Do not worry about the mind.' If your mind is dissipating or if there are distractions in your mind and you are not able to concentrate even for one second, it does not matter. You have only to continue with your practices, for even without confronting, controlling or trying to balance the mind, you can still evolve.

This is an entirely new concept in spiritual life, and most people have probably never even considered it. When they take to a religion, commence spiritual practices or go to gurus, the first thing they are told is to control the mind. 'You should think like this. Don't think like that. You should do like this. Don't do that. This is good. This is bad. That is evil. Do not sin.' And so on.

People think that the mind is the greatest barrier in spiritual life, but this is a very wrong and dangerous concept. The mind is a bridge between this and that, so how can it be a barrier? An idiot thinks it is a barrier and he tries to destroy that bridge. Then when he has destroyed it, he wonders how he'll get to the other side. This is the ironical fate of most people, and unfortunately it is the religions, ethics and morality that are responsible. The people who are less aware of ethics and morality have no mental problems. They are very good, happy-go-lucky people.

The seers and rishis of kriya yoga have said, 'Control of mind is not necessary. Just go on practising the kriyas and let the mind do what it wants. In the course of time, the evolution of consciousness will take you to that point where the mind will no longer trouble you.'

Dissipation of mind is not necessarily the fault of the mind. Distractions can be due to hormonal imbalances, bad digestion, low influx of energy in the nervous system and so many other things. Never blame the mind for its restlessness, and don't consider yourself to be an impure, bad or inferior person because your mind jumps all over the place, thinking negative things and what you consider to be evil thoughts, etc.

Everybody has negative thoughts and distractions of mind, even a compassionate and charitable person, a peaceful man, a chaste and pure person. Dozens of factors could be the cause of a distracted mind. Suppressing the mind and calling it back again and again is not the way to concentrate the mind, it is a way to the mental hospital. After all, who suppresses or calls back who? Are there two personalities or two minds in you? Is there one bad mind which keeps wandering off and one good mind which tries to bring back the bad mind? No, there is only one mind and you should not create a split by antagonizing the mind. If you do this, one part of the mind becomes the dictator and controller and the other part becomes the victim. Then you'll develop a great gap between two aspects of your mind and personality and within a very short time you'll become totally schizophrenic.

It is necessary to understand this point very well, because our religions, philosophies and ways of thinking have not been very systematic, loving and tender in their approach to the mind. We have always been led to believe that the mind is very mischievous, but this is a grave mistake. Therefore, please try to redefine the mind and approach it scientifically.

Mind is not a psychological stuff, nor is it a thought process. Mind is energy. Anger, passion, greed, ambition, etc. are waves of that energy. Through kriya yoga

you are trying to harness the energies of the mind, but you should not try to suppress this energy because it will explode. And the more you suppress this energy the greater will be the ultimate explosion.

Kriya yoga is very clear in its approach to the mind. It emphasizes that you do not try to do anything with the mind. If your body protests about maintaining a fixed posture, change it. If your mind objects about closing the eyes, keep them open. But you must continue with the kriya yoga practices because they have a direct effect on the deeper processes of the body which are responsible for the state of your mind. Remember that the body affects the mind and the mind affects the body.

We should not consider the techniques of kriya yoga as practices of concentration or meditation as their aim is not mental control. The beauty of kriya yoga is that you have only to remain relaxed and let the mind move naturally and spontaneously. Inner awareness will then awaken, and in time, your mind will automatically become one-pointed.

A path for all

As you know, we are all aspirants of a different caliber. Some of us are tamasic, some are rajasic and a very small number are sattvic. Of course we are not purely sattvic, rajasic or tamasic. Predominantly we are one of these, but we retain traces of the other two gunas. The tamasic mind has traces of rajo guna, and as it evolves, it retains traces of tamas, but it is now predominantly rajasic. It also develops traces of sattva. As it evolves further, it becomes more rajasic and may or may not have traces of tamas and sattva. Next, it becomes predominantly sattvic, with traces of rajo and tamo gunas here and there. And then in its fifth stage of evolution, the mind becomes totally sattvic, manifesting rajo and tamo gunas very rarely.

These five stages are like rungs on a ladder, representing the evolution of chitta or the mind. The lowest rung is known as the inert mind. The second rung is the scattered mind, the third is the oscillating mind, the fourth is the one-pointed mind and the fifth is the controlled mind.

Now, if you belong to one of the first three categories, and most of us do, after practising hatha yoga, you should take to kriya yoga. If you belong to one of the last two categories, then after hatha yoga, you can take to kriya yoga if you want, or you can follow the path of raja yoga or any other path which asks you to concentrate through willpower. When you are at the sattvic level you can deal with the mind through the mind, but when you are at the tamasic or rajasic level, if you try to deal with the mind through the mind, you will cause a mental crisis.

In this world, there are very few sattvic people. Most of us have a very restless and distracted mind, and we find it impossible to focus on one object or theme for very long. You know what happens if you light a candle when the wind is blowing? The same thing happens when most people try to concentrate. The fluctuations of the mind totally annihilate the one-pointedness. So, the kriya yoga practices were designed for those people who are unable to control, concentrate or stabilize their mind and for those who cannot sit in one posture for a prolonged period of time.

Whether you are sattvic, rajasic or tamasic, the practices of hatha yoga should be taken up first. A tamasic person needs hatha yoga to awaken his mind, body and personality. A person who is rajasic needs hatha yoga to balance the solar and lunar energies in his body and mind. And a person who is sattvic by temperament needs hatha yoga to help him awaken kundalini. Hatha yoga is for everybody. And if you have been practising asanas, pranayama, mudras and bandhas consistently for two years or more, then you are ready for kriya yoga. Hatha yoga is the basis of kriya yoga.

The practices

There are many kriya yoga practices, but a combination of 20 is considered very important and powerful. These 20 practices are divided into two groups. One group is to be done with the eyes open, that is the first 9, and the other group, comprised of 11 practices, is to be done with the eyes closed. For the first group of practices, the central instruction is, 'Do not close your eyes.' Even though you feel very relaxed and have a tendency to go within, you must not close your eyes. You can blink, you can rest, you can stop the practices for a minute, but each practice must be done with the eyes open. This is a very important instruction for kriya yoga practice.

The first practice in kriya yoga is called vipareeta karani mudra. Vipareeta means reverse, karani means action, so vipareeta karani mudra is a method for creating a reverse action. In *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* and in the tantric texts, there is a wonderful statement regarding this reverse action:

"From the moon the nectar emanates. When the sun consumes the nectar, the yogi becomes old. His body decays and he dies. Therefore, by constant practice, the yogi should try to reverse the process. The nectar which is flowing from the moon (bindu visarga) towards the sun (manipura chakra) should be reversed and sent back to the higher centers." What will happen then? *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* continues: "When you are able to reverse the flow of amrit or nectar, it will not be consumed by the sun. It will be assimilated by your pure body."

When your body has been purified by hatha yoga, pranayama and a pure diet, this nectar is assimilated by the body, and as a result of this, you experience a high mental state. When the nectar returns to its source in the higher centers of the brain, and is not consumed by the sun, you begin to feel a sort of calmness and quietness. Even if your mind was distracted, confused, wandering and vacillating a few moments before, suddenly all these activities come to an end and you feel total brightness. Your eyes are open, you can hear sounds and see everything around you, but the mind does not move. It appears as if time, space and object have ceased and the whole universe has stopped functioning.

The main hypothesis or contention here, is that you can influence the structures of the body; you can create a change in the energy forces. And by creating a change in the physical secretions, by altering the chemical proportions and the energy proportions in the body, you can create an effect on the mind which you may call shanti, dharana, dhyana or samadhi. This means that even when your mind is totally undisciplined and you cannot handle it for a second, if you are able to create the

correct proportion of secretions in the different areas of the body/mind, then the higher state can be achieved.

You know what happens if you take a dose of ganja (marijuana)? Take a few puffs and see what happens to your mind. It slows down and the brain waves change from theta to beta, from alpha to delta. Suddenly you feel calm and quiet. What happened to your mind? You didn't fight with it. I'm not advocating the use of ganja, I'm just giving you a very gross example of how kriya yoga works on your mind. By infusing ganja or some hallucinogenic drug, the chemical properties of the gross body change. The heart slows down, the breathing rate changes, the brain waves alter and the mind becomes calm and still. Is it not possible to arrive at the same point through kriya yoga? Yes; this is exactly what is accomplished through kriya yoga.

The various practices of kriya yoga, particularly vipareeta karani mudra, amrit pan, khechari mudra, moola bandha, maha mudra, maha bheda mudra, etc. regulate the nervous system. They harmonize the pranic forces in the body and equalize the quantity and effects of the positive and negative ions. More than that, they help you to attain a state of peace and tranquility without beating, kicking and abusing the mind. All this is a result of having induced the flow of certain unused and natural chemicals of the body. Amrit is one of those chemicals and through a practice known as khechari mudra, it can be made to flow.

Khechari mudra

Khechari mudra is a simple but very important technique which is utilized in most of the kriya yoga practices. It involves folding the tongue back and placing it against the upper palate. In the course of time the tongue gets elongated and can be inserted into the nasal orifice. Then certain glands which are connected with the cranial passage and bindu visarga are stimulated, and as a result, amrit or nectar begins to flow. When amrit is released you experience a special type of 'high' or intoxication.

It might take you a few years to perfect khechari mudra and to stimulate the flow of amrit, but it is well worth the effort. When you sit for meditation the mind is perfectly still, it cannot move and you cannot think. There is *shoonyata*, an experience of total nothingness. If you are practising mantra you feel that somebody else is practising and you are only witnessing it. This is considered a very important experience because it puts you in touch with the external and internal experiences at the same time and you are completely aware of yourself. You attain a state where you are simultaneously aware of the world of mind, senses and objects, and the world of inner peace, tranquility and relaxation. When there is perfect harmony in the nervous system, coronary behavior is in inertia, body temperature is low and alpha waves are predominant in the brain, how can the mind move? This is the philosophy of kriya yoga.

Readiness for kriya yoga

If through the yoga practices you have been doing, you have reached a point where you find that although concentration has been achieved, inner peace has been experienced and you can maintain total quietness of body, mind and spirit for a prolonged period, but still you feel there is something more to achieve, you are definitely ready for kriya yoga.

Peace of mind, relaxation and proper understanding, which are the fruits of spiritual life, are not an end in themselves. The ultimate purpose of yoga is to change the quality of experience and to change the quality of the mind and its perception. What man has aimed to achieve through yoga is expansion of mind and liberation of energy, and in essence, that is tantra, and that is the ultimate goal of kriya yoga.

Chapter 14

Vama Marga and Kundalini Awakening

Sexual life has always been a problem for mankind. From the beginning of history, the primal energy has been misunderstood. Religious teachers and moralists have denounced it. But still sexual life has continued, not because man respects it, but because he needs it. He may give it up, but he cannot remove it from his mind, for this is one of his most powerful urges.

In the context of yoga and tantra the common definition of sexual life has no relevance. It is absolutely unscientific and incorrect. This definition has created a society and a nation of hypocrites. It has led thousands of young people into mental asylums. When you want something which you think is bad, all kinds of guilt complexes arise. This is the beginning of schizophrenia, and all of us are schizophrenic to some extent.

Therefore, the yogis have tried to give a correct direction to the sexual urge. Yoga does not interfere with sexual life. Normal sexual life is neither spiritual nor aspiritual. But if you practise yoga and master certain techniques, then sexual life becomes spiritual. Of course, if you lead a celibate life, that is spiritual too.

Left hand tantra

The science of tantra has two main branches, which are known as *vama marga* and *dakshina marga*. Vama marga is the left path which combines sexual life with yoga practices in order to explode the dormant energy centers. Dakshina marga is the right path of yoga practices without sexual enactment. Previously, due to the barriers in sexual life, the path most widely followed was dakshina marga. Today, however, these barriers are rapidly being broken, and the path most sought after by

the people everywhere is vama marga, which utilizes sexual life for spiritual development.

According to tantra, sexual life has a threefold purpose. Some practise it for procreation, others for pleasure, but the tantric yogi practises it for samadhi. He does not hold any negative views about it. He does it as a part of his sadhana. But, at the same time, he realizes that for spiritual purposes, the experience must be maintained. Ordinarily this experience is lost before one is able to deepen it. By mastering certain techniques, however, this experience can become continuous even throughout daily life. Then the silent centers of the brain are awakened and they start to function all the time.

The energy principle

The contention of vama marga is that the awakening of kundalini is possible through the sexual interaction between man and woman. The concept behind this follows the same lines as the process of fission and fusion described in modern physics.

Man and woman represent positive and negative energy. On a mental level they represent time and space. Ordinarily, these two forces stand at opposite poles. During sexual interaction, however, they move out of their position of polarity, towards the center. When they come together at the nucleus or central point, an explosion occurs and matter becomes manifest. This is the basic theme of tantric initiation.

The natural event that takes place between man and woman is considered as the explosion of the energy center. In every speck of life, it is the union between the positive and negative poles that is responsible for creation. At the same time, union between the positive and negative poles is also responsible for enlightenment, and the experience which takes place at the time of union is a glimpse of the higher experience.

This subject has been thoroughly discussed in all the old scriptures of tantra. Actually, more important than the energy waves that are created during the mutual union, is the process of directing that energy to the higher centers. Everybody knows how this energy is to be created, but nobody knows how to direct it to the higher centers. In fact, very few people have a full and positive understanding of this natural event which almost everybody in this world experiences. If the conjugal experience, which is generally very transitory, could be extended for a period of time, then the experience of enlightenment would take place.

The elements that are brought together in this process of union are known as Shiva and Shakti. Shiva represents *purusha* or consciousness and Shakti represents *prakriti* or energy. Shakti, in different forms, is present in all creation. Both material and spiritual energy are known as Shakti. When the energy moves outwardly, it is material energy and when it is directed upwards it is spiritual energy. Therefore, when the union between man and woman is practised in the correct way, it has a very positive influence on the development of spiritual awareness.

Retaining the bindu

Bindu means a point or a drop. In tantra, bindu is considered to be the nucleus, or the abode of matter, the point from which all creation becomes manifest. Actually, the source of bindu is in the higher centers of the brain. But due to the development of emotions and passions, bindu falls down to the lower region where it is transformed into sperm and ova. At the higher level, bindu is a point. At the lower level, it is drop of liquid, which drips from the male and female orgasm.

According to tantra, preservation of the bindu is absolutely necessary for two reasons. Firstly, the process of regeneration can only be carried out with the help of bindu. Secondly, all the spiritual experiences take place when there is an explosion of bindu. This explosion can result in the creation of a thought or of anything. Therefore, in tantra, certain practices are recommended by which the male partner can stop ejaculation and retain the bindu.

According to tantra, ejaculation should not take place. One should learn how to stop it. For this purpose, the male partner should perfect the practices of vajroli mudra as well as moola bandha and uddiyana bandha. When these three kriyas are perfected, one is able to stop ejaculation completely at any point of the experience.

The sexual act culminates in a particular experience which is reached only at the point of explosion of energy. Unless the energy explodes, the experience cannot take place. But this experience has to be maintained, so that the energy level remains high. When the energy level falls ejaculation takes place. Therefore, ejaculation is avoided, not so much to preserve the semen, but because it causes a depression in the level of energy.

To make this energy travel upwards through the spine, certain hatha yoga kriyas have to be mastered. The experience which is concomitant of energy has to be raised to the higher centers. It is only possible to do this if you are able to prolong and maintain that experience. As long as the experience continues, you can direct it to the higher centers. But as soon as the energy level undergoes depression, ejaculation will inevitably take place.

Ejaculation brings down the temperature of the body and at the same time, the nervous system undergoes depression. When the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems undergo depression, it affects the brain. That is why many people have mental problems. When you are able to retain the semen without ejaculating at all, the energy in the nervous system and the temperature in the whole body are maintained. At the same time, you are free from the sense of loss, depression, frustration and guilt. Retention will also help to increase the sexual frequency, and that is better for both partners. The sexual act does not have to create weakness or dissipate the energy, on the contrary, it can become a means of exploding the energy. Therefore, the value of retaining the bindu should not be underestimated.

In hatha yoga there are certain practices which must be perfected for this purpose. You should begin with asanas such as paschimottanasana, shalabhasana, vajrasana, supta vajrasana and siddhasana. These are beneficial as they place an automatic contraction on the lower centers. Sirshasana is also important because it

ventilates the brain so that all of one's experiences will be healthy experiences. When these postures have been mastered, shambhavi mudra is perfected in order to hold the concentration steadily at bhrumadhya. Then vajroli mudra has to be practised together with moola bandha and uddiyana bandha in kumbhaka. Practice of kumbhaka is necessary while the ejaculation is being held. Retention of the breath and the bindu go hand in hand. Loss of kumbhaka is loss of bindu, and loss of bindu is loss of kumbhaka.

During kumbhaka, when you are maintaining the experience, you should be able to direct it to the higher centers. If you are able to create an archetype of this experience, perhaps in the form of a serpent or a luminous continuity, then the result will be fantastic. So, in spiritual life, bindu must be preserved at all costs.

The female experience

In the female body, the point of concentration is at mooladhara chakra, which is situated at the cervix, just behind the opening of the uterus. This is the point where space and time unite and explode in the form of an experience. That experience is known as orgasm in ordinary language, but in the language of tantra it is called an awakening. In order to maintain the continuity of that experience, it is necessary for a buildup of energy to take place at that particular bindu or point. Usually this does not happen, because the explosion of energy dissipates throughout the body through the sexual medium. In order to avoid this, the woman must be able to hold her mind in absolute concentration on that particular point. For this, the practice is known as sahajoli.

Actually, sahajoli is concentration on the bindu, but this is very difficult. Therefore, the practice of sahajoli, which is the contraction of the vaginal as well as the uterine muscles, should be practised over a long period of time.

If girls are taught uddiyana bandha at an early age, they will perfect sahajoli quite naturally with time. Uddiyana bandha is always practised with external retention. It is important to be able to perform this in any position. Usually it is practised in siddhayoni asana, but one should be able to do it in vajrasana or the crow posture as well. When you practise uddiyana bandha, the other two bandhas - jalandhara and moola bandha occur spontaneously.

Years of this practice will create a keen sense of concentration on the correct point in the body. This concentration is more mental in nature, but at the same time, since it is not possible to do it mentally, one has to start from some physical point. If a woman is able to concentrate and maintain the continuity of the experience, she can awaken her energy to a high level.

According to tantra, there are two different areas of orgasm. One is in the nervous zone, which is the common experience for most women, and the other is in mooladhara chakra. When sahajoli is practised during *maithuna* (the act of sexual union), mooladhara chakra wakes up and the spiritual or tantric orgasm takes place.

When the female yogi is able to practise sahajoli for say 5 to 15 minutes, she can retain the tantric orgasm for the same period of time. By retaining this experience,

the flow of energy is reversed. Circulation of blood and sympathetic/parasympathetic forces move upward. At this point, she transcends normal consciousness and sees the light. That is how she enters the deep state of dhyana. Unless the woman is able to practise sahajoli, she will not be able to retain the impulses necessary for the tantric orgasm, and consequently she will have the nervous orgasm, which is short-lived and followed by dissatisfaction and exhaustion. This is often the cause of a woman's hysteria and depression.

So, sahajoli is an extremely important practice for women. In uddiyana, nauli, naukasana, vajrasana and siddha yoni asana, sahajoli comes naturally.

The practice of amaroli is also very important for married women. The word *amaroli* means 'immortal' and by this practice one is freed of many diseases. The practice of amaroli over a prolonged period also produces an important hormone known as prostaglandin which destroys the ova and prevents conception.

Tantric guru

Just as in the scheme of creation, Shakti is the creator and Shiva the witness of the whole game, in tantra the woman has the status of guru and the man of disciple. The tantric tradition is actually passed on from the woman to the man. In the tantric practice, it is the woman who initiates.

It is only by her power that the act of maithuna takes place. All preliminaries are done by her. She puts the mark on the man's forehead and tells him where to meditate. In ordinary interaction, the man takes the aggressive role and the woman participates. But in tantra, they switch roles. The woman becomes the operator and the man her medium. She has to be able to arouse him. Then, at the right moment, she must create the bindu so he can practise vajroli. If the man loses his bindu, it means that the woman has failed to carry out her functions properly.

In tantra it is said that Shiva is incapable without Shakti. Shakti is the priestess. Therefore, when vama marga is practised, the man must have an absolutely tantric attitude towards the woman. He cannot behave with her as men generally do with other women. Ordinarily, when a man looks at a woman he becomes passionate, but during maithuna he should not. He should see her as the divine mother, Devi, and approach her with an attitude of devotion and surrender, not with lust.

According to the tantric concept, women are more endowed with spiritual qualities and it would be a wise thing if they were allowed to assume higher positions in social affairs. Then there would be greater beauty, compassion, love and understanding in all spheres of life. What we are discussing here is not patriarchal society versus matriarchal society, but tantra, particularly left hand tantra.

Path of yogis not bhogis

In tantra, the practice of maithuna is said to be the easiest way to awaken sushumna, because it involves an act which most people are already accustomed to.

But, frankly speaking, very few are prepared for this path. Ordinary sexual interaction is not maithuna. The physical act may be the same, but the background is totally different.

In the relationship between husband and wife, for example, there is dependency and ownership, but in tantra each partner is independent, one unto himself. Another difficult thing in tantric sadhana is cultivating the attitude of passionlessness. The man has to virtually become brahmacharya in order to free the mind and emotions of sexual thoughts and passion which normally arise in the presence of a woman.

Both partners must be absolutely purified and controlled internally and externally before they practise maithuna. This is hard for the ordinary person to comprehend because for most people, sexual interaction is the result of passion and physical or emotional attraction, either for progeny or pleasure. It is only when you are purified that these instinctive urges are absent. This is why, according to tradition, the path of dakshina marga must be followed for many years before the path of vama marga can be entered. Then the interaction of maithuna does not take place for physical gratification. The purpose is very clear - awakening of sushumna, raising the kundalini energy from mooladhara chakra, and exploding the unconscious areas of the brain.

If this is not clear when you practise the kriyas and sushumna becomes active, you will not be able to face the awakening. Your head will get hot and you will not be able to control the passion and excitement, because you have not tranquilized your brain.

Therefore, in my opinion, only those who are adepts in yoga qualify for vama marga. This path is not to be used indiscriminately as a pretext for self-indulgence. It is meant for mature and serious minded householder sadhakas, who are evolved, who have been practising sadhana to awaken the energy potential and to attain samadhi. They must utilize this path as a vehicle of awakening, otherwise it becomes a path of downfall.

Practices for Ajna Chakra

Month 1

Direct concentration on ajna chakra is very difficult, and for this reason, in tantra and yoga the mid-eyebrow center (which in fact is the kshetram of ajna), is used to awaken this chakra. This point is called *bhrumadhya* ('bhru' means eyebrow and 'madhya' means center), and it lies between the two eyebrows in the place where Indian ladies put a red dot and pandits and brahmins put a mark of sandal paste. This eyebrow center can be contacted by various techniques.

Firstly, there is an important shatkriya (cleansing technique) called *trataka*, which will aid in the awakening of ajna. It is a powerful technique which can be defined as 'fixed gazing at one point'. If practised regularly, it develops the power of

concentration, and from this concentration, the direct awakening of the latent faculties of ajna chakra is brought about.

Ajna can also be contacted by concentrating on the nadis directly. The method for this is *anuloma viloma pranayama*, which is known in English as 'the coming and going pranayama'.

You can also awaken ajna chakra by concentrating on the eyebrow center, by such practices as *shambhavi mudra*. Initially, when there is no sensation or awareness at this point, some ointment or oil such as tiger balm can be applied. This facilitates concentration. With practice, the pressure of concentration at this area increases and the sensations are carried back to the pineal gland. This brings about an awakening there in the form of visions and internal experiences.

Ajna and mooladhara chakras are closely related, and the awakening of one helps to awaken the other. Ideally, ajna should be awakened to some extent before mooladhara, in order to allow an unaffected perception of the energies manifested by mooladhara and the lower chakras. However, the awakening of mooladhara will help to further awaken ajna. In fact, the best way to bring about awakening of ajna is through the practices of *moola bandha* and *ashwini mudra* which are specific for mooladhara.

Preparatory practices

Jala and *sutra neti* can be practised for a few months to purify the nasal area. This will help to sensitize ajna chakra and aid in its awakening. Apart from having a profound effect on the nervous system, neti removes dirt and mucus from the nasal passages, relieving colds and sinusitis, disorders of the eyes, ears, nose and throat, as well as inflammation of the tonsils, adenoids and mucus membranes. It removes drowsiness and gives a general lightness and freshness in the head and throughout the body. At the same time, it profoundly alters psychic awareness, facilitating free flow of breath in both nostrils, so that the meditative state can be attained. It should be practised every morning before you commence your other sadhana. For complete details refer to the Bihar School of Yoga publication *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha*.

Practice 1: Anuloma viloma pranayama (the coming and going breath)

Sit in a comfortable meditative posture.

Make sure the spine is erect and the body is relaxed.

The body must become absolutely still.

After some minutes, begin to develop awareness of the breath in the nostrils.

When you breathe in, your whole awareness should flow with the breath from the tip of the nose, through the nasal passages, up to the eyebrow center.

And when you breathe out, your whole awareness should flow with the breath from the eyebrow center to the tip of the nose.

Become aware of the triangular form of the breath between the nostrils and the eyebrow center. The base of the triangle is at the level of the upper lip, its sides are the right and left nasal passages, and its apex is within the eyebrow center.

Firstly, feel the breath moving in and out of the left nostril, then the right nostril. Then be aware of the breath as it flows in and out through both nostrils together.

Once you are established in this breath awareness, begin to consciously alternate the flow of the breath between the two nostrils in the same way as nadi shodhana, except you practise it psychically. Consciously inhale through the left nostril to bhru-madhya and exhale through the right, then inhale through the right to bhrumadhya, and exhale through the left. This is one round-After completing four such rounds, inhale and exhale through both nostrils simultaneously, visualizing the passage of the breath forming an inverted V-shape. In this way you have to continue - four alternate nostril breaths, then one breath through both nostrils. Count the rounds from 100 back to zero.

100 - inhale left nostril, exhale right nostril;
inhale right nostril, exhale left nostril,
99 - repeat, 98- repeat, 97- repeat,
96- inhale both nostrils, exhale both nostrils, and so on.

Note: Accuracy in the counting is absolutely necessary, and if an error is made, the practice must recommence from 100. It is very important to keep count of the breaths, because without keeping count, anuloma viloma is altogether too powerful for many aspirants, swallowing up their awareness in the unconscious sphere- The aim of the practice is to stimulate ajna chakra on the subconscious, psychic level, and for this, awareness must be maintained.

If you sink into the unconscious sphere, you will only be aware of the vast store of impressions in the unconscious mind, and will completely lose awareness of the practice. This awareness is essential for the development of mind control and the awakening of ajna chakra to conscious accessibility.

This practice can also be very well integrated into yoga nidra. (See practice chapter 2)

Practice 2: Trataka



Fixed gazing on one point

Fixed gazing on one point

Sit in a comfortable meditative asana, in a dark room in which there is no draught or breeze.

Place a lighted candle at eye level, directly in front of the eyebrow center, at a distance of approximately two feet.

Make sure that the wick is perfectly straight and that the flame is motionless.

Straighten the spine, close the eyes and relax the body.

Be aware of the physical body only. Let it become as still as a statue. From this time on you should try to keep the body absolutely motionless throughout the whole practice.

When you are prepared, open your eyes and gaze intently at the brightest part of the flame - just above the tip of the wick.

With practice you should be able to gaze at the flame for a few minutes, without blinking or moving the eyeballs.

Continue to gaze at the flame with total concentration. The whole of your consciousness must become centered in the flame, to the extent that awareness of the rest of the body and the room is lost.

The gaze should be absolutely fixed on one point.

When the eyes become tired (perhaps after a few minutes), or if they begin to water, close them and relax.

Do not move the body, but be aware of the after-image of the flame in front of the closed eyes.

Everyone has looked into the sun or a bright light, and on closing the eyes for a few minutes, has seen the clear impression of that light on the retina of the eye. Likewise, the after-image of the candle flame will be clearly visible.

You should practise *trataka* on this image, holding it directly in front or a little above the eyebrow center-As soon as it begins to fade, open the eyes again and continue to concentrate on the external candle flame.

Note: The best times to practise *trataka* are the dark hours of the very early morning or late at night. At these times, the atmosphere becomes very still and quiet - not only the physical atmosphere, but the mental and psychic atmospheres also. In this stillness, success in *trataka* is readily attained.

Other forms of *trataka*

Trataka can be practised on a small dot, the full moon, a shadow, a crystal ball, the nosetip, an image in water, a yantra, darkness, a shivalingam and many other things.

Those who have a personal deity can practise *trataka* on his or her form and those who have a guru can practise on his or her photograph. *Trataka* can also be practised on the rising sun, one's own image in the mirror, or the eyes of another person. These should, however, be done under the guidance of a guru, as there are certain risks involved.

There are two divisions of *trataka*, *bahiranga* (outer) and *antaranga* (inner). The methods mentioned so far are all part of *bahiranga trataka*. Inner *trataka* (*antaranga*) is internal visualization, perhaps of a chakra, a yantra or your personal deity. The eyes remain closed throughout. One of the best inner objects for concentration is a tiny star or point of light.

Duration: *Trataka* can be practised as time permits, but 15 to 20 minutes is the usual period in the beginning.

Benefits: *Trataka* has many physical, mental and spiritual benefits. Physically, it corrects eye weaknesses and certain defects such as nearsightedness. Mentally, it increases nervous stability, removes insomnia and relaxes the anxious mind. When the eyes are fixed and unmoving, the mind becomes the same. The thinking process automatically ceases as concentration increases. It brings control to the tempestuous mind, and spiritually it awakens ajna chakra.

Practice 3: Shambhavi mudra with Om chanting



Eyebrow center gazing

Stage 1

Sit in any meditative pose with the back straight and hands on the knees.

Look forward at a fixed point, then look upward as high as possible without moving the head.

Focus the eyes and concentrate on the eyebrow center.

Try to suspend the thought processes and meditate on ajna chakra.

Repeat *Om, Om, Om*, with awareness of the sound vibrations at the eyebrow center into which you are gazing. Each *Om* should be produced in a soft clear voice, with awareness of every vibration of the mantra in the eyebrow center. Each mantra should be one or two seconds in duration, and immediately followed by the next.

Practise for 3 to 5 minutes.

Stage 2

Now the eyes are closed, but the inner gaze remains in the eyebrow center.

Begin to chant the mantra more slowly, with full awareness of the sound vibration in the eyebrow center. Imagine that the sound is being emitted from within the eyebrow center itself.

Gradually and effortlessly increase the duration of each *Om*, making it long and continuous.

The sound should be steady and of an even key, ending on completion of the breath.

Then refill the lungs completely by breathing through the nose, but do not alter the position of the body or head.

Begin the next *Om*, maintaining awareness of the sound emerging from the eyebrow center.

Practise for 5 minutes.

Stage 3

Continue to chant the mantra *Om*, but become aware of the sound reverberating throughout the body.

Try to be aware of the sound only, listening to its vibration emerging from the eyebrow center and permeating the whole body.

Do not be self-conscious, but allow the sound to manifest itself fully, maintaining awareness of the vibration of the sound only.

Practise for 5 minutes.

Gradually the duration of the practice can be lengthened.

Caution: Do not strain the eye muscles; when they become tired or slightly strained, release shambhavi mudra.

Practise

This sadhana (consisting of practices 1, 2 and 3), for ajna chakra, should be continued daily for one month. Then proceed to the sadhana for awakening mooladhara chakra.

Practices for Mooladhara Chakra

Month 2

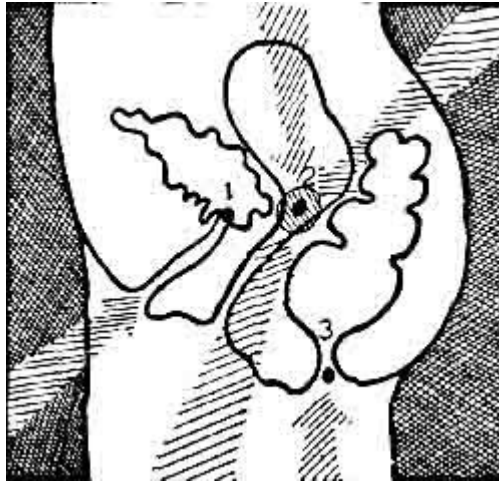
The process of awakening mooladhara chakra is not very difficult. It can be achieved by thousands of different methods, but the easiest of all is the

concentration on the tip of the nose. This is because the part of the sensory cortex which represents mooladhara chakra is connected with the nose. At the same time, mooladhara chakra belongs to the earth element, which is directly related to the sense of smell. Therefore, we shall include *nasikagra drishti* - the practice of nosetip gazing, in this section, as well as *moola bandha*, which directly stimulates mooladhara chakra. Remember that mooladhara chakra does not have a kshetram.

Difference between moola bandha, vajroli and ashwini mudras

Often there is confusion between the three practices of moola bandha (used for awakening mooladhara chakra) and vajroli mudra and ashwini mudra (both used for awakening swadhsthana chakra). The following diagrams for male and female locations will help to clarify the difference in the points of contraction.

For women:



Key to location of contraction points:

1. Vajroli or sahajoli mudra (clitoris, lower vaginal muscles and urethra)
2. Moola bandha (cervix)
3. Ashwini mudra (anal muscled/sphincters).

For men:



Key to exact location of contraction points:

1. Vajroli mudra (penis)
2. Moola bandha (between anus and scrotum; perineal body)
3. Ashwini mudra (anal muscles/sphincters).

Practice 1. Chakra location

For men :

Sit in siddhasana or any asana in which the heel is pressed into the perineum.

Close your eyes, relax completely and become aware of your whole physical body.

Move your awareness to the point of contact between the heel and perineum, midway between the testes and the anus.

Become intensely aware of the distinct pressure exerted on the perineal body.

Center yourself at the pressure point.

Now become aware of your breath.

Feel or imagine that you are breathing in and out of this pressure point.

Feel the breath moving through the perineal body, becoming finer and finer, so that it pierces the point where mooladhara chakra is located.

You will feel it as a psychophysical contraction.

Say mentally, "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara".

Maintain awareness of the perineal body and the breath for up to 5 minutes.

For women:

Sit in siddha yoni asana or a suitable alternative.

Relax your body completely and close your eyes.

Move your awareness to the lower part of the body and focus your attention on the contact point between your heel and the opening of the vagina.

Become intensely aware of the slight but distinct pressure at this point.

Center yourself at the pressure point.

Now become aware of your natural breath.

Feel or imagine that you are breathing in and out of the pressure point.

Continue this for 10 deep breaths.

Now bring your awareness inside the body.

From the point of external pressure, move your awareness in towards the base of the spine.

Follow the natural formation of the vagina, moving up at a slight angle and back towards the spine until you come to the opening of the womb.

You are at the opening of the womb, about 2 or 3 centimeters inside the body, just below the base of the spine.

Focus your awareness at this point and begin to breathe in and out from the cervix to the point of outer pressure.

Breathe in and bring your awareness to the opening of the womb.

Breathe out and move again to the outer pressure point.

Somewhere in this area you will find your point for mooladhara chakra.

Feel it clearly and distinctly and mentally repeat, 'mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara'.

Maintain unbroken awareness of this point for up to 5 minutes.

Alternative practice: Locating mooladhara chakra by touch

Men should sit in a comfortable position and press one finger onto the perineum, midway between the anus and scrotum, then contract the muscles there. The contraction will be felt. When they can contract those muscles without movement of the anus or penis, the perineal body has been successfully isolated.

Women should assume a comfortable sitting or lying position and gently insert one finger into the vagina as far as it will go. Then tighten the muscles so that the walls of the upper vagina contract and squeeze the finger. If they can do this without contracting the anus or the front part of the perineum (clitoris and urinary opening), then location of mooladhara is correct.

Practice 2: Moola bandha (the perineal lock)

Stage 1:

Sit in siddhasana or any other posture which applies a firm pressure in the region of mooladhara chakra.

Close the eyes and relax the whole body.

Inhale deeply.

Hold the breath and contract the muscles at the mooladhara chakra region.

Draw the muscles upwards as much as you are able without excessive strain.

Try to contract only the mooladhara chakra trigger point, so that the urinary musculature in front and the anal sphincters behind, remain relaxed.

Keep your attention fixed on the exact point of contraction.

Hold this contraction for as long as possible.

Then release moola bandha and breathe normally.

Practise for a few minutes daily.

Jalandhara bandha (described in chapter 9 of this section), can also be added to the practice. With breath retention, perform jalandhara bandha, then moola bandha. Before exhaling, release moola bandha, then jalandhara bandha.

Stage 2:

Contract and release moola bandha rhythmically.

About one contraction per second is reasonable, or if you wish, you can synchronize the contraction with the heart beat.

Again, ensure that the contraction is focused at the exact trigger point and at the anus.

Direct all your attention to the point of contraction.

Practise for a few minutes daily.

Stage 3:

Leave all physical contraction.

Try to feel the pulse beat at the trigger point, or try to contract the point mentally.

Direct all your attention to the mooladhara chakra area.

The practice is the same as stage 2, but without physical contraction. Continue for as long as you have time to spare.

With practice, you will be able to locate the trigger point of mooladhara chakra exactly, merely through thought.

Practice 3: Nasikagra drishti

This practice is also called *agochari mudra* (the gesture of invisibility).



Nosetip gazing

Nosetip gazing

Sit in any meditative pose with the spine erect and the head facing forward.

Close your eyes and relax your whole body for some time.

Then open your eyes and focus them on the nosetip.

Do not strain your eyes, but try to fix your gaze on the tip of the nose.

Respiration should be normal.

When the attention of both eyes is focused on the nosetip, you will see that the double outlines of the nose merge to become a single solid outline.

You should direct your gaze to the V-shaped point where the two outlines cross each other at the very tip of the nose.

If you do not see a solid V-shaped outline, then both eyes are not fixed on the nosetip.

It is then necessary to focus the eyes on your finger, 10 inches in front of your face, and hold the fingertip in focus as you slowly bring it to the nosetip.

Eventually, you can discard this method and easily focus the eyes on the nosetip at will.

At first you may find it difficult to hold your attention on the nosetip for more than a few seconds.

When you feel discomfort, release the position of the eyes for a few seconds and then repeat the practice.

Over a period of weeks, as the eyes become accustomed, gradually increase the duration of practice.

Never strain the eyes.

Once you can comfortably maintain a steady gaze for a minute or more, become aware of your breath as well as the nosetip.

Feel the breath moving in and out through the nose.

At the same time, become aware of the subtle sound the breath makes as it moves through the nasal passages.

Try to become completely absorbed in the practice, to the exclusion of all other thoughts and external distractions.

Be aware of the nosetip, the movement of the breath and the accompanying sound.

Carry on in this manner for up to 5 minutes.

Practise

This sadhana (practices 1, 2 and 3), for mooladhara chakra, should be done for a period of one month. You should also continue the practices for awakening ajna chakra.

Practices for Swadhsthana Chakra

Month 3

The sadhana for awakening swadhsthana chakra is solely concerned with the uro-genital systems of the body - the prostate gland and testes in the male, and the genito-ovarian system in the female. There are two very powerful practices which rechannel sexual energy and help bring about the awakening of swadhsthana. These are vajroli and sahajoli mudras. Vajroli is practised by males and sahajoli by females. There are simple forms of vajroli and also more difficult techniques which require the direct guidance of a guru. However, the practice given here can be performed by anyone who is thoroughly familiar with shalabhasana, dhanurasana and uddiyana bandha. When these practices are performed, vajroli and sahajoli can be perfected with reasonable ease.

Note: See the section entitled, 'Difference between moola bandha, vajroli and ashwini mudras', given in Chapter 5 of this section.

Preparatory practices

A large number of asanas have a direct effect on swadhsthana chakra and help to bring about initial purification and sensitization. We suggest that you practise *shakti bandha series, bhujangasana, shashankasana, dhanurasana and shashank-bhujangasana.*

Practice 1: Swadhsthana chakra location

Sit in a comfortable position.

Move one finger down to the lowest end of the spine and feel the coccyx, the tailbone.

Then move the finger up about one inch, along the sacral portion of the pelvis, and press hard for one minute.

When you take the finger away, you will experience a residual sensation.

About half an inch deep into that sensation is the location of swadhisthana chakra.

Concentrate on it for 2 minutes or so repeating mentally, 'swadhisthana, swadhisthana, swadhisthana'.

Practice 2: Kshetram location

If you feel down to the lower end of the abdomen, you will come to a bony portion at the front part of the pelvis. This is called the pubis, and is the anatomical location of swadhisthana kshetram.

Press hard on this area for about one minute.

Then remove the finger and concentrate on the point where your finger was and repeat mentally, 'swadhisthana, swadhisthana, swadhisthana'.

Practice 3: Ashwini mudra

Sit in any meditative posture.

Relax the whole body, close the eyes and breathe normally.

Contract the sphincter muscles of the anus for half a second, relax them for half a second, then contract them again and continue like this.

Try to feel the waves spreading up to hit swadhisthana chakra.

Focus your whole attention on the lower end of the spine and feel the pressure waves.

Continue this for a few minutes.

Practice 4: Vajroli mudra (for men)

Sit comfortably in siddhasana, preferably with a thin cushion or a folded blanket beneath the buttocks.

Close the eyes and relax.

Try to draw the sexual organ upward by pulling and tensing the lower abdomen and contracting the urinary system.

This contraction is similar to that which is made when the urge to urinate is controlled.

Try not to perform moola bandha or ashwini mudra at the same time.

Contract for 10 seconds, release for 10 seconds and continue this alternately.

Concentrate on the kshetram at the pubis all the time, repeating mentally, 'swadhisthana, swadhisthana, swadhisthana'.

Continue for a few minutes.

Practice 4: Sahajoli (for women)

Sit comfortably in siddha yoni asana, preferably with a thin cushion or folded blanket beneath the buttocks.

Make sure your foot is perfectly clean before you place the heel inside the vaginal entrance.

Close your eyes and relax.

Contract the muscles of the vagina and then relax them several times in succession.

Gradually increase the contraction until it becomes more intense and deep.

Hold the contraction for 10 seconds, release for 10 seconds and continue like this, mentally repeating, 'swadhisthana, swadhisthana, swadhisthana'.

Continue for a few minutes.

Note: This practice is also known as *ohji mudra*.

Practise

The sadhana (practices 1-4) for awakening swadhisthana chakra, should be perfected over a period of one month. It should be kept in mind that swadhisthana is the switch for bindu visarga, and therefore, the sadhana for swadhisthana also brings about a simultaneous effect on and awakening of bindu.

You can also continue the sadhana for ajna and mooladhara chakras.

Practices for Manipura Chakra

Month 4

*There are several methods of awakening manipura chakra. According to hatha yoga, manipura is directly connected with the eyes. Ajna chakra and manipura chakra are very closely related to one another in the same way that vision and willful action are interdependent processes. Therefore, the practice of *trataka* brings about manipura awakening as well as ajna chakra awakening.*

Although tantra is not against any particular diet, when manipura chakra is to be awakened, the diet has to be very pure, and at certain stages, fasting may be necessary as well. If manipura is awakened when the diet is faulty, harmful reactions may take place. Because manipura is the center of the digestive fire, disorders of the gastrointestinal system are corrected by manipura sadhana.

The major constituents of manipura sadhana are *uddiyana bandha* and *navli kriya*. Uddiyana bandha is the contraction of the abdomen and the control of the muscles of the abdominal wall, as well as control over the small and large intestines and the other digestive and visceral organs. The functions of the liver, gallbladder, spleen, pancreas and stomach are brought into harmonious and controlled interaction when uddiyana bandha is perfected. However, *agnisar kriya* must be mastered before uddiyana is attempted.

Navli kriya is the control of the rectus abdomini muscles and churning of the whole abdomen. This is a difficult practice which takes some time to perfect. However, with mastery of navli, it is easy to create a union of prana and apana in the navel, so manipura chakra can be awakened.

Preparatory practices

The following asanas will be found useful in awakening manipura chakra: *pawanmuktasana* (anti-gastric series), *chakrasana*, *dhanurasana*, *marjariasana*, *matsyasana*, *yoga mudra*, *paschimottanasana* and *ushtrasana*.

Practice 1: Chakra and kshetram location

Stand sideways in front of a mirror.

Put one finger of one hand on the navel and one finger of the other hand on the spine, directly behind.

Sit down, press firmly with the finger on the spine for one minute, then remove the finger.

As the pressure sensation continues, concentrate on the area slightly deeper in from that point.

This is the location of *manipura chakra*.

Mentally repeat the mantra, 'manipura' for a few minutes, while feeling the sensation at that point.

Then fix your attention at the navel itself.

This is the location of *manipura kshetram*.

Whilst feeling the blood pulse at this point, mentally repeat the mantra, 'manipura' for a few minutes.

Practice 2 : Manipura purification

Assume a comfortable sitting pose.

Hold the back straight and keep the eyes closed.

Breathe slowly and deeply, feeling the expansion and contraction of the navel as you breathe in and out through the navel.

Feel the breath expanding and contracting in the navel area for some minutes.

As the navel expands outward, feel that the breath is being pulled in through the navel, straight back to manipura in the spine.

As the navel contracts inward, feel that the breath flows from manipura chakra in the spine to the navel and out of the body.

Practise this for a few minutes each day while mentally repeating, 'manipura, manipura, manipura'.

Practice 3: Agnisar kriya



Increasing the digestive fire

Increasing the digestive fire

Technique 1: (simple form)

Sit in vajrasana.

Keeping the toes together, separate the knees as far as possible.

Keep both hands on the knees, straighten the arms and lean forward slightly.

Open the mouth and extend the tongue outside.

Breathe rapidly in and out while simultaneously expanding and contracting the abdomen.

The respiration should be in harmony with the movement of the abdomen and should resemble the panting of a dog.

Breathe in and out up to 25 times.

Technique 2 : (advanced form)

Assume the same pose as technique 1.

Exhale as completely as possible.

Perform jalandhara bandha.

Rapidly contract and expand the abdominal muscles repeatedly, for as long as you are able to retain the breath outside.

Release jalandhara bandha and inhale fully.

Perform the practice 4 more times, each time waiting until the breath has returned to normal.

Note: Agnisar kriya should be practised on an empty stomach early in the morning. The advanced form should not be attempted until the simple form is mastered. Sufferers of heart disease or peptic ulcer should not practise agnisar kriya, nor should pregnant women or persons who have undergone abdominal surgery in the last 6 to 9 months.

Practice 4: Uddiyana bandha



The abdominal lock.

The abdominal lock

Sit in a meditative pose in which the knees touch the floor.

If this is not possible, then you can perform uddiyana while standing.

Place the palms on the knees, close the eyes and relax the whole body.

Exhale completely and keep the breath outside.

Perform jalandhara bandha.

Then contract the abdominal muscles as far as possible inward and upward.

This is a kind of sucking action of the muscles.

Hold this lock for as long as the breath can be retained outside.

Concentrate on manipura chakra in the spine and repeat mentally, 'manipura, manipura, manipura'.

Slowly relax the stomach muscles.

Release jalandhara bandha and inhale.

When the respiration has returned to normal, the process may be repeated.

Practise a few rounds and gradually increase to 10.

Note: Limitations are the same as for agnisar kriya.

Practice 5: Nauli



Abdominal churning

Abdominal churning

Stand with the feet separated by about a meter.

Place the hands on the knees and bend the knees slightly.

Perform uddiyana bandha in this position.

Stage 1 : Madhyama nauli

Contract the rectus abdomini muscles and isolate them at the center of the abdomen.

After mastering this, proceed to the next stage.

Stage 2 : Varna nauli



Left abdominal churning

Left abdominal churning

Isolate the rectus abdomini muscles at the left side of the abdomen.

Stage 3: Dakshina nauli

Isolate the rectus abdomini muscles at the right side of the abdomen.

Stage 4

The practitioner should be able to perform stages 1-3 without the slightest difficulty, before attempting this stage.

Perform uddiyana bandha from the standing position.

Isolate the rectus abdomini muscles, then try to churn or roll them so that they move from the left, to the center, to the right in one smooth motion, then from the right, to the center, to the left.

Repeat this movement in quick succession as many times as possible while retaining the breath outside.

Then relax the abdominal muscles and breathe in deeply and fully.

When the respiration has returned to normal, repeat the process, this time rolling the muscles from right to left.

Practise each round for as long as you can retain the breath.

Do up to 6 rounds - 3 times from left to right and 3 times from right to left.

Note: Nauli should not be attempted until agnisar kriya and uddiyana bandha

have been perfected. Limitations are the same as for agnisar kriya. Sufferers of high blood pressure should also avoid this practice.

Practice 6: Union of prana and apana

Sit in siddhasana or siddha yoni asana.

Relax the whole body for a few minutes, bringing it to the point of absolute immobility.

Now become aware of the natural abdominal breath.

Center your awareness on the movement of the navel as you inhale and exhale.

Continue for some minutes.

Now become aware that there are two forces travelling to the navel - prana and apana.

One force (*apana*) is ascending from mooladhara to the navel, while the other (*prana*), is descending to the navel from above.

They must both reach the navel at the point of full inhalation.

When you feel that the two forces are meeting in the navel, perform kumbhaka, retention of breath, and then develop mental awareness of the single central point of force in the navel.

Do not strain.

Release the breath and continue this practice in your own natural rhythm.

The awareness of the two forces travelling and meeting in the navel center must be simultaneous.

Now, as the two forces are converging in the navel, gradually allow moola bandha to take place.

Go on contracting moola bandha as you heighten your awareness of the force which is centered in the navel.

Hold your breath for as long as you can, while centralizing the force in the navel and performing moola bandha.

As you release the breath, release moola bandha as well. Do not strain. Go on practising for 3 minutes or more.

Practise

Practise the techniques for awakening manipura chakra for one month and then proceed to those for anahata chakra. Nauli may be difficult for many people; do not strain or overexert. It is best not to attempt it until you have mastered agnisar kriya and uddiyana bandha.

The practices for awakening ajna, mooladhara and swadhisthana can also be continued.

Practices for Anahata Chakra

Month 5

Anahata chakra can be awakened very simply through the practice of ajapa japa. Japa means "repetition" and ajapa is the repetition of a mantra until it ultimately becomes the spontaneous form of your conscious awareness.

Another important practice in anahata awakening is *bhramari pranayama*. Although it is called a pranayama, bhramari is actually a meditational practice. It is not directly related to controlling prana, as are other forms of pranayama. In the scriptures, the heart center is termed, "the center of unstruck sound" and also "the cave of bees." In bhramari, the humming sound of the bees is produced and traced towards its source. This develops deep mental and emotional relaxation and is extremely effective in cardiac disorders.

Anahata chakra is the center of bhakti or devotion. It is awakened in accordance with the degree of devotion to guru, God, or personal deity, in whatever form or non-form one may visualize or understand the spiritual intelligence of the universe. All practices of yoga, especially when done with the blessings of the guru, will automatically awaken devotion in the spiritual heart (anahata chakra). There are many excellent books on bhakti yoga which will help to inspire the aspirant to follow this path. Any biographies of saints, yogis and bhaktas will also be useful. An excellent description of the process of bhakti yoga is given in our publication entitled, *A Systematic Course in the Ancient Tantric Techniques of Yoga and Kriya*.

Preparatory practices

Asanas that help to purify anahata chakra include: *shalabhasana, dhanurasana, matsyasana, gomukhasana, kandharasana, baddha padmasana, sarpasana, supta vajrasana* and *sirshasana*.

Practice 1: Chakra and kshetram location

Stand sideways in front of a mirror.

Put one finger of one hand on the center of the chest.

Here you will find *anahata kshetram*.

Put one finger of the other hand on the spine, directly behind the kshetram; this is *anahata chakra*.

Sit down, press both fingers firmly for one minute, and then remove the fingers.

The sensation at the chakra and kshetram will continue.

Concentrate on the sensation at the chakra and mentally repeat, 'anahata, anahata, anahata', for a few minutes.

Practice 2: Anahata purification

Assume a comfortable sitting posture.

Hold the back straight but without strain.

Keep the eyes closed.

Breathe slowly and deeply, feeling the expansion and contraction of the chest as you breathe in and out for some minutes.

Then become aware of your breath moving in and out of the anahata region.

As the chest expands, feel that the breath flows in through the center of the chest and back to anahata chakra.

As the chest contracts, feel that the breath flows from anahata chakra in the spine, through the center of the chest and out of the body.

Practise this for some minutes, mentally repeating, 'anahata, anahata, anahata'.

Practice 3: Bhramari pranayama



The humming breath

The humming breath

Sit in a comfortable meditative pose.

Adjust your position and relax fully for some minutes.

Plug the ears with the index fingers.

Face forward and hold the spine as straight as possible.

Close the eyes.

Relax the whole body.

Keep the teeth slightly separated and the mouth closed throughout the entire practice.

This allows the vibration to be experienced more distinctly in the brain.

Breathe in slowly and deeply.

Then, while breathing out, produce a humming sound.

The sound should be smooth and continuous for the full duration of exhalation.

The humming need not be loud.

The important thing is that you hear the sound reverberating within your head.

The exhalation should be slow and controlled.

At the end of exhalation, stop the humming sound and breathe in.

Keep the eyes closed and the ears plugged.

Again repeat the humming sound with the next exhalation.

Try to relax fully during the practice. Do not strain in any way.

Continue for 5 or 10 minutes.

Practice 4: Ajapa japa meditation

Sit in siddhasana, siddha yoni asana or any posture which feels completely comfortable.

Close your eyes and relax for a few minutes.

Now become aware of your natural breath as it enters and leaves the body.

Do not try to control the breath, just become a witness of the natural breathing process.

Now become aware that the sound of inhalation is *so* and the sound of exhalation is *ham*. The natural mantra of the breath is *so-ham*.

You have only to discover it.

Be simultaneously aware of the natural breath, coupled with the idea of *so-ham-so-ham-so-ham*.

You must be totally relaxed in this practice.

Do not lose awareness of the mantra or your natural breath, even for an instant. Do not be concerned with the thoughts and feelings that arise.

Allow them to come and go as they will. Remain ever aware of the natural breath and the ongoing mantra.

Now become aware of the psychic breath which is flowing in the front of the body between the navel and the throat, and between the throat and the navel.

With inspiration, this psychic breath rises from the navel to the throat and its mantra is *so*. With expiration, the psychic breath descends from the throat back to the navel. Its mantra is *ham*.

Maintain awareness of the breath passing through the psychic passageway and producing the sound *so-ham-so-ham-so-ham*.

Continue this practice for 10 or 15 minutes more, allowing your breathing to be totally relaxed.

Note: Ajapa japa can be practised at any time, but it should be done for 5 to 10

minutes per day - either in the morning sadhana session or at night, immediately before sleep. It should be continued for at least one month.

Practice 5: Meditation - entering the heart space

Sit in siddhasana or any other comfortable posture.

Close your eyes and relax yourself completely for some time.

Concentrate your awareness in the throat region.

Now become aware of the breath in the throat.

Only be aware of the sensation of the breath in the throat for some time.

Now add the awareness of the ingoing breath from the throat downwards.

You are not concerned with the outgoing breath.

Your attention is occupied only with the ingoing breath in the throat.

Become aware of the inflowing breath in the throat passing within the network of the diaphragm.

Be aware of the diaphragm - the rising and falling muscular floor separating the chest and lungs above from the abdominal organs below.

With each inspiration, it drops into the abdomen a little, increasing the pressure there and causing the navel to expand.

Simultaneously, the lungs are expanding fully in the chest.

Be aware with expiration that the abdomen contracts, the diaphragm is rising and the lungs are emptying completely.

Develop awareness of the diaphragm for some time.

Now, also become aware of the *akasha*, the space within which the diaphragm is operating.

With the ingoing breath you feel this space is filling up.

Only be aware of the process of filling up the space.

This process of filling up is only a basis for the awareness of this vast space.

The process of feeling the breath is only the basis for experiencing the heart space.

Become aware of the space in the heart; take your awareness directly there.

Feel the space within the heart. It is contracting and expanding with the rhythm of the natural breath.

Breath is only the basis.

The process of filling up is only the basis.

Go on to comprehend the whole space.

Then you are aware of the space alone.

Feel the contraction and expansion of this vast space.

It is taking place on the rhythm of the natural breath.

The breath is natural and spontaneous.

Do not alter it in any way.

Do not make it longer or shorter, deeper or more shallow, faster or slower.

It has to become a spontaneous and voluntary movement of breath.

In this practice the awareness of the space in the heart is important.

If the awareness of the expansion and contraction of the heart space is constant and stabilized, after some time, many visions and experiences will manifest there.

You do not have to visualize or imagine anything. The vision will come by itself when the awareness of the heart space is constant.

The vision is of a lake and a blue lotus.

If you are able to feel the space of the heart contracting and expanding, then maintain your awareness there.

If that is not possible, then you have to feel the breath which is filling up the space. That is the first stage of the practice.

The second stage is the direct feeling of the space and its expansion and contraction on the rhythm of the breath.

The third stage is the awareness of the blue lotus and the still lake. It will come by itself.

Keep yourself ready for that experience.

Now become aware of the natural inflowing and outflowing breath in the throat.

Withdraw your awareness from the heart space and bring it to the natural breath in the throat.

Maintain awareness of the inflowing and outflowing breath in the throat for some time.

Practise for 5 or 10 minutes.

Chant *Om* 3 times.

Allow the sound to manifest fully and spontaneously from deep within.

For a few minutes, listen carefully for the inner vibration of the sound.

Release your posture and open your eyes.

Practise

Practise these techniques for awakening anahata chakra for one month and then proceed to those for awakening vishuddhi chakra.

All the practices given for awakening ajna, mooladhara, swadhisthana and manipura chakras can be done if sufficient time is available. If not, then we suggest that you do a few selected techniques from each chakra sadhana as follows:

ajna - trataka and shambhavi mudra

mooladhara - moola bandha and nasikagra

mudra swadhisthana - chakra and kshetram location, vajroli or sahajoli

manipura - chakra and kshetram location, uddiyana bandha and nauli (if possible).

Practices for Vishuddhi Chakra

Month 6

Vishuddhi chakra can be directly awakened through the practices of *jalandhara bandha*, *vipareeta karani asana* and *ujjayi pranayama*, all of which are essential for eventual mastery of kriya yoga.

A minor chakra which is closely related to vishuddhi is called *lalana chakra*, which is located at the back of the roof of the mouth, at the soft palate, and it directly helps to awaken vishuddhi. For this reason, one of the kundalini kriyas, called *amrit pan*, is concerned with its direct stimulation. A simpler practice for awakening lalana is *khechari mudra*, which is described in this chapter.

Preparatory practices

Many asanas can be utilized for purifying vishuddhi chakra. The most important are: *bhujangasana*, *sirshasana*, *matsyasana*, *supta vajrasana* and *sarvangasana*.

Practice 1: Jalandhara bandha

Sit in any meditative pose which allows the knees to firmly touch the floor. Those who cannot sit like this can practise Jalandhara bandha standing.

Place the palms of the hands on the knees.



The chin lock

The chin lock

Close the eyes and relax the whole body. Inhale deeply, retain the breath inside and bend the head forward, pressing the chin tightly against the chest (particularly the sternum).

Straighten the arms and lock them into position.

Simultaneously hunch the shoulders upward and forward - this will ensure that the elbows remain locked.

The palms should remain on the knees.

Stay in the final pose for as long as you are comfortably able to retain the breath.

Then relax the shoulders, bend the arms, slowly release the lock, raise the head and exhale.

Repeat when the respiration returns to normal.

Practise 5 times.

Note: The whole practice can also be performed with the breath retained outside.

* Never inhale or exhale until the chin lock has been released and the head is upright.

* Persons with high intracranial or blood pressure, or with heart ailments, should not practise without expert guidance.

Practice 2: Khechari mudra

Close the mouth and roll the tongue backward so that the normally lower surface touches the upper palate.

Try to bring the tip of the tongue as far back as possible without strain.

Keep it there for as long as it is comfortable.

If you experience discomfort, relax the tongue for a few seconds and repeat.

After some practice the tongue may be able to extend beyond the palate and up into the nasopharynx, where it will stimulate many vital nerve centers.

Breath: Breathe normally during this practice unless ujjayi is used.

Over a period of a few months, however, it is usual to reduce the breathing rate to 7 or 8 breaths per minute. With careful practice, preferably under expert guidance, the respiration rate can be further reduced.

Note: Advanced practitioners sometimes erode or slowly divide the frenulum membrane beneath the tongue. This is not recommended here, and should only be attempted under direct guidance from a guru.

Practice 3: Ujjayi pranayama

Practise khechari mudra.

Contract the glottis in the throat.

When you breathe under these circumstances, a very soft snoring sound should automatically come from the throat region. It is like the sound of a sleeping baby.

Feel that you are breathing through the throat and not the nose.

Try to make the breaths long and relaxed.

Practise for 2 minutes initially, then you can gradually extend the time.

Practice 4: Chakra and kshetram location and purification

Sit or stand in front of a mirror.

Place a finger of one hand on the glottis (the lump at the front of the throat).

This is the location point of *vishuddhi kshetram*.

Then place a finger of the other hand on the spine, directly behind the kshetram.

This point in the spine is called *vishuddhi chakra*.

Press the spine for one minute in order to feel a sensation at the chakra area.

Then lower your hands.

Concentrate on the sensation at the chakra and repeat mentally, 'vishuddhi, vishuddhi, vishuddhi'.

Sit in a comfortable position with the back straight.

Close the eyes and become aware of the breath.

Fold your tongue back into khechari mudra and practise ujjayi pranayama.

For a minute or so, be aware of the sound of the breath at the throat, and let your breathing become slower and deeper.

Then with inhalation, imagine that the breath is being drawn in through *vishuddhi kshetram* at the front of the throat.

Feel that the breath passes through the kshetram and eventually pierces *vishuddhi chakra* in the spine.

With exhalation, feel the breath move from vishuddhi chakra, forward through the kshetram and eventually out, in front of the body.

This is one round.

Continue for a few minutes.

Daily practice in this manner will gradually develop your sensitivity to vishuddhi chakra and kshetram.

Practice 5: Vipareeta karani asana



The inverted attitude

The inverted attitude

Lie flat on the floor with the feet together, the arms by the sides and the palms flat on the floor.

Breathe in deeply.

Using the arms as support, raise the legs over the head, keeping them straight.

Bend the arms and place the hands under the hips to support the body.

Raise the legs to the vertical position.

Breathe deeply, fixing your attention on the breath.

Eyes should be closed.

Note: Vipareeta karani asana is similar to sarvangasana, except that the chin is not pressed against the chest and the trunk is held at a 45 degree angle to the ground instead of at right angles.

* Shavasana is the counterpose and should be done for a few minutes on completion of vipareeta karani asana.

* Advanced practitioners can hold the posture for 15 minutes or even more; beginners should practise for a few seconds and add a few seconds daily.

* This asana should not be done by sufferers of thyroid, liver or spleen enlargement, high blood pressure or heart ailments.

* Vipareeta karani asana is widely used in kundalini yoga since it helps to redirect the energies of the body from the lower to the higher chakras. It is an integral part of the first of the kundalini kriyas called *vipareeta karani mudra*.

Practise

Perfect these vishuddhi chakra practices over a period of one month and then start the practices for bindu visarga.

The sadhana for the other chakras can also be continued with a few selected techniques from each chakra as follows:

ajna - trataka and shambhavi mudra

mooladhara - moola bandha and nasikagra mudra

swadhisthana - chakra and kshetram location, vajroli (or sahajoli)

manipura - chakra and kshetram location, uddiyana bandha and nauli

anahata - chakra and kshetram location, ajapa japa.

Practices for Bindu Visarga

Month 7

The bindu visarga trigger point is considered to be a tiny point at the top of the back of the head, but this point cannot be located physically. It can only be found when the nada or sound of bindu has been discovered and traced to its source. Through the practice of *moorchha pranayama* and *vajroli mudra* awareness of the nada can be developed. Then, through practices such as *bhramari pranayama* and *yoni mudra*, the nada can be traced to its source.

It is not intended that you practise all the nada yoga techniques at one time. You should adopt the practice which you can perform without difficulty. It does not matter which practice you commence with, because all the techniques lead to awareness of the same subtle inner sounds.

There is a very close relationship between swadhisthana chakra and bindu visarga. This is because bindu is the point where the primal sound of creation first manifests. It is the point of origin of individuality, and swadhisthana is the source of the impetus towards reproduction and sexual function. This is the material expression of the desire to reunite with the infinite consciousness beyond bindu. Sperm and menses are the material distillates of the drop of ambrosial nectar which emerges from bindu visarga.

Note: There is no kshetram corresponding to bindu.

Practice 1: Moorchha pranayama



The fainting breath attitude

The fainting breath attitude

This practice requires a steady and firm asana - siddhasana is the best.

Hold the spine and head upright and relax the whole body.

Perform khechari mudra.

Inhale through the nostrils with ujjayi pranayama while simultaneously bending the head backward and assuming shambhavi mudra.

The inhalation should be slow and deep. At the end of inhalation, your head should lean backward, but not completely. The position of the head is as shown in the diagram.

Retain the breath inside for as long as is comfortable, maintaining shambhavi mudra, but keeping the attention at bindu.

Keep the arms straight by locking the elbows and pressing the knees with the hands.

Fix your whole awareness on bindu.

Then bend the arms and slowly exhale with ujjayi pranayama as you bend the head forward. Slowly lower and close the eyes.

At the end of exhalation your head should face forward and the eyes should be completely closed.

Relax the whole body for a short time, keeping the eyes closed.

Release khechari mudra and breathe normally.

Become aware of the lightness and calmness pervading the whole mind.

This is one round.

After some time, commence the second round.

Practice 10 or more rounds, or until a fainting sensation is experienced.

Perform each round for as long as possible, but without strain.

Note: Not for sufferers of high blood pressure, vertigo, high intracranial pressure or brain hemorrhage.

* You should practise until a state of semi-fainting is induced. If you go beyond this sensation you may become unconscious.

* This practice is very powerful in inducing pratyahara and rendering the mind free from thoughts, especially when kumbhaka is prolonged.

Practice 2: Vajroli mudra with awareness of bindu

Sit in siddhasana or siddha yoni asana.

Close the eyes and relax.

Try to draw the sexual organs upward by pulling and tensing the lower abdomen and contracting the urinary system. This contraction is similar to that which is made when the urge to urinate is controlled.

Contract for 10 seconds, release for 10 seconds, and continue this alternately.

Each time you attain full contraction of the urinary and reproductive systems, bring your awareness to swadhisthana chakra in the spinal column, at the level of the coccyx. Repeat, 'swadhisthana, swadhisthana, swadhisthana', mentally.

Then draw your awareness up through sushumna passage to bindu visarga, uniting the sexual and reproductive energy with its source in bindu.

Mentally repeat, "bindu, bindu, bindu".

Then return to swadhisthana and release vajroli mudra.

This is one round.

Continue this alternately for several minutes, practising up to 25 rounds.

Note: This practice should be performed immediately after moorchha pranayama, as both these practices awaken the awareness of bindu.

Practice 3: Perception of subtle inner sound

This practice should be preceded by bhramari pranayama.

In this stage no loud humming sound is produced, you only listen attentively to the inner sound.

You should keep your eyes closed and your fingers in your ears; this is necessary to block out external disturbances.

Listen for any subtle sounds within your head.

At first you may find this difficult, but keep trying.

As soon as you become aware of a sound, any sound, try to fix your awareness on it to the exclusion of other sounds.

Go on listening.

After some days or weeks of practice, you should find that one sound is very distinct, and it will become louder and louder.

Be totally aware of that sound.

This is your vehicle of awareness - let your awareness flow towards this sound, leaving all other sounds and thoughts.

Gradually, through practice, your sensitivity will increase.

Eventually you will hear another sound, a faint sound in the background; it will be almost obliterated by the main, louder sound that you are hearing, but you will hear it nevertheless.

You should now listen to the new faint sound.

Leave the other louder sound and continue to listen to this new sound. It will become more and more distinct.

This will become the new, more subtle vehicle of your awareness.

Let this sound occupy your whole attention. This will further increase your sensitivity of perception.

Eventually you will hear another faint sound emerging from behind this louder sound.

Fix your awareness on this new sound, discarding the other sound.

Continue in the same manner, allowing the new sound to occupy your whole awareness.

When it becomes loud, try to perceive a more subtle underlying sound and fix your awareness on it.

In this manner your perception will become progressively more sensitive, allowing you to dive deep into your being.

Note: It requires practice over a period of weeks and months to perceive these progressively more subtle sounds. For many weeks you may be unable to hear even the first sound.

* This is a very simple but powerful technique that will bring results if you persevere. All that is necessary is time and effort. Try to practise for as long as you have time. In the beginning, devote 15 minutes or more to bhramari and this practice together.

Practice 4: Yoni mudra

Yoni mudra is also known as *shanmukhi mudra*, which means, 'the closing of the seven gates'. It is so called because the two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and the mouth arc closed during the practice. These are the seven doors of outer perception. It is via these doorways that one receives the sense data from the outside world. When these doors are closed, we facilitate the direction of the awareness internally; that is, into the mind.

Yoni mudra is amore advanced practice than bhramari. It is slightly more difficult as it is not preceded by a vocalized humming sound, and it is combined with retention of the breath. Yoni mudra is more suitable for those who have a reasonably harmonized mind and are not beset by distractions.



The invocation of the source

The invocation of the source

Sit in any comfortable meditative asana, preferably siddhasana.

Completely relax the body and mind.

Bring the hands in front of the face, with the elbows pointing sideways. Hold the spine atid head upright.

Close the ears with the thumbs, the eyes with the index fingers, the nostrils with the middle fingers and the mouth with the ring and small fingers placed above and below the lips respectively.

The fingers should gently but firmly close the seven doors.

Throughout the practice, the middle fingers should release the nostrils during inhalation and exhalation.

Now inhale deeply and slowly.

At the end of inhalation, close the nostrils with the middle fingers and retain the breath.

Try to hear sounds emanating from bindu at the back of the head, from the middle of the head, or perhaps the right ear.

At first you will either hear many sounds or none - it does not matter.

Just continue listening.

Hold your breath for as long as it is comfortable.

Then release the pressure of the middle fingers and slowly breathe out.

This is one round.

Inhale once more, close the nostrils, and retain the breath.

Listen to the inner sounds.

After a comfortable length of time, release the nostrils and breathe out.

Continue in this way for the duration of the practice.

During the period of breath retention, your full awareness should be directed to the perception of inner nada.

At first there may be a confused jumble of sounds, but gradually you will hear a specific sound. This may take a few days or weeks, but it will be perceived.

When you hear a distinct sound, be totally aware of it.

It will become clearer and clearer.

Keep your awareness fixed on the sound.

Listen very carefully.

If your sensitivity is sufficiently developed, you will hear another sound in the background. It may be faint, but perceptible.

Leave the first sound and transfer your awareness to the perception of the fainter sound.

In this way you will transcend the first sound.

Eventually this second sound will overwhelm your whole attention.

Again, with practice and enhanced sensitivity, you will hear a further sound start to emerge. It will be faintly perceptible behind the louder second sound.

Direct your awareness to this new sound.

Carry on in this way - perceive a sound and then discard it when you can hear a more subtle sound.

The more subtle the sound you perceive, the deeper you will delve into the depth of your being.

Continue this practice for a few minutes.

Do not expect to hear subtle sounds on your first attempt. Practice is necessary. Eventually you will be able to readily transcend the gross external sounds and then the progressively more subtle sounds.

Do not dwell on any of the sounds for too long. This is not the purpose of the practice. The aim is to leave behind each sound you discover and to go deeper.

Do not get lost or distracted by the beautiful sounds which will manifest on your journey.

Breath retention: This technique is more effective if you can retain your breath for extended periods of time. Those aspirants who have been practising nadi shodhana pranayama regularly for some months beforehand, will find yoni mudra an easy and effective means of introspection.

Awareness: The point of awareness during the practice should be fixed at the back of the head in the bindu region. However, if you hear a distinct sound in any other area, such as the right ear or the middle of the head, then your awareness should be fixed there.

Some people may find it easier to listen to the nada in the region of the heart space (anahata chakra), especially those of a devotional nature. The important thing is not so much the point of awareness, but that the awareness remains fixed on progressively more subtle sounds. Total absorption on the nada can lead to dhyana or the meditative state of awareness.

Practise

Practise the techniques for bindu visarga for one month. Then begin the techniques given in the next chapter for integrated chakra awareness.

The selected techniques for ajna, mooladhara, swadhisthana, manipura and anahata chakras can also be done daily, as given in the "Practise" section of the previous chapter. For vishuddhi chakra, jalandhara bandha, vishuddhi chakra purification and vipareeta karani asana can be done. Khechari mudra and ujjayi pranayama need not be done separately, since they are both incorporated into techniques given in this section.

Practices for Integrated Chakra Awareness

Month 8

So far we have given a series of practices for each of the individual chakras. In this chapter we will describe practices which are concerned with overall awakening of the chakras. Of course, the awakening of one chakra cannot take place in isolation; it must have repercussions on all the chakras to a greater or lesser extent. In this respect it can be said that the techniques for specific chakras will also influence all

the chakras, but the following techniques systematically help to activate all the chakras together and bring balance into the whole mind-body-chakra axis. The practices are as follows:

1. Chakra meditation
2. Musical chakra meditation
3. Chaturtha pranayama
4. Chakra yoga nidra
5. Unmani mudra
6. Bija mantra sanchalana
7. Drawing the chakras.

Practice 1: Chakra meditation

Make yourself comfortable in a meditative asana, preferably siddhasana or siddha yoni asana.

Place both hands on the knees in chin mudra (palms facing upward, thumbs and forefingers together).

Close your eyes and make the body steady throughout.

The spinal column should be absolutely upright and straight, with the back and shoulders fully relaxed.

The head should be poised comfortably on top of the spinal column.

The whole body is completely relaxed and immobile.

It is motionless like a statue.

Maintain absolute awareness of the physical body for several minutes.

Become aware of the spinal column.

Now bring your awareness to ajna chakra.

Ajna chakra is located inside the brain at a point directly behind the eyebrow center and on top of the spinal column, where the pineal gland is situated.

Try to discover a pulsation within this ajna chakra region.

Be absolutely aware of this pulsation.

Now synchronize the mantra *Om* with the pulsation in the ajna chakra region.

Om, Om, Om, Om, Om, should be the form of your awareness with the pulsation of ajna chakra.

Count the pulsation 21 times.

Now begin to practise ashwini mudra.

Do not be concerned with ajna chakra, only practise ashwini mudra - contraction and relaxation of the anus.

It should be practised at a medium speed - neither too quickly nor too slowly.

After practising like this for a few sessions, you should be able to feel the center of ajna automatically while performing ashwini.

When that happens you can begin to concentrate directly on ajna.

Until then, go on with ashwini mudra for about 4 minutes.

Now bring your awareness to the perineal region and the psychic center of mooladhara chakra.

Discover the precise psychic point of mooladhara chakra.

Now try to discover a subtle pulsation there.

Localize the pulsation very precisely in the mooladhara region and count 21 pulsations.

Now open your eyes and adopt nasikagra drishti; gazing at the nosetip.

Do not be concerned with mooladhara chakra, but only with nosetip awareness.

The simultaneous awareness of mooladhara chakra will come after some time.

Continue this practice for 3 minutes.

Now bring your awareness to swadhisthana chakra in the region of the tail bone.

Discover the psychic point of swadhisthana chakra.

Try to discover the pulsation in this center.

Count this pulsation 21 times.

Now perform vajroli mudra - the drawing up and releasing of the genital and urinary systems.

Continue vajroii mudra for 4 minutes.

Then bring your awareness to the region of the navel.

Become aware of the psychic breath from mooladhara to the navel, and from the throat to the navel.

Both these breaths must reach the navel at the point of full inhalation.

When the two forces meet and coincide in the navel, retain the breath there, and develop the mental awareness of the single central point offeree in the navel.

Then release the breath and continue this practice in your own natural rhythm.

Continue for 4 minutes.

Now take your awareness directly back to manipura chakra, within the spinal column, directly behind the navel.

Try to isolate that point and the pulsation there.

Count the pulse 21 times in manipura chakra.

Now bring your awareness to the region of anahata chakra in the spinal column, at the level of the center of the chest.

Isolate that point and try to discover a pulsation within it.

Count the pulsation 21 times.

Now bring your awareness to the space of the heart.

First become aware of the ingoing breath in the throat.

With the ingoing breath, feel the vast heart space filling up.

Feel the heart space directly - contracting and expanding with the rhythm of the spontaneous, natural breath.

Be aware of the vision which will come in the vast heart space.

Allow it to come by itself.

Continue for 2 minutes.

Now bring your awareness to the throat pit and then take it directly back to vishuddhi chakra in the spinal column.

Repeat mentally, 'vishuddhi, vishuddhi, vishuddhi'.

Try to discover the pulsation within vishuddhi and witness it for 21 pulsations.

Now as the name of each chakra is given, move your awareness within sushumna passage so as to touch the chakra with a small imaginary flower.

This is all that you have to feel, but your awareness of each chakra must be very precise - mooladhara, swadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi, ajna; ajna, vishuddhi, anahata, manipura, swadhisthana, mooladhara.

Guide the consciousness through the chakras in sushumna, ascending and descending 4 more times. Now chant *Om* 3 times.

Practice 2: Musical chakra meditation

Sound is a particularly effective and enjoyable means of developing awareness of the chakras. This is why nada yoga is so powerful in spiritual awakening.

The 7 notes of the musical scale correspond to the vibration of the 7 chakras from mooladhara to sahasrara, and this is the basis for a very effective musical meditation technique. The best instrument of all is the human voice, which can be supplemented by the harmonium. However, other instruments can also be used.

Latin scale	Chakra	Sanskrit scale
Do	mooladhara	Sa
Re	swadhisthana	Re
Mi	manipura	Ga
Fa	anahata	Ma
So	vishuddhi	Pa
La	ajna	Dha
Ti	bindu	Ni
Do	sahasrara	Sa

Stage 1

At first the musical scale of the harmonium is ascended very slowly while the awareness begins in mooladhara and ascends sushumna from one chakra to the next, feeling, each note vibrating in the spinal column in the region of its corresponding chakra. When sahasrara is attained, descend the awareness with the musical scale down through sushumna to mooladhara. The consciousness ascends and descends sushumna with the scale many times, slowly speeding up as chakra location becomes quick and effortless.

Stage 2

Now the voice is integrated with the notes. The names of the chakras are chanted very precisely. The names themselves are mantras, and if intoned with the correct note and pronunciation, each center can be set vibrating, and the sushumna passage and the whole body begin to vibrate with energy. This practice is very powerful. It can be continued for 10 minutes or more.

Stage 3

In this stage the awareness still ascends and descends through sushumna with the musical scale, but the voice makes a continuous a-a-a-a-a sound (as in calm) as it ascends and descends through the chakras. In the final stage the full power of the voice is released and a tremendous energy is generated, provided the pitch is maintained accurately.

Practice 3: Chaturtha pranayama

Here is a practice that combines breathing, mantra and chakra awareness. Although it is not widely taught, it is a powerful technique that is both a pranayama and a meditation. Chaturtha pranayama means, 'pranayama of the fourth state', or a transcendental state where words and definitions fail to reach.

This practice will lead to deeper awareness and knowledge of the chakras. It is also a preparatory technique for kriya yoga as it develops sensitivity to both the psychic spinal passage and the chakras.

Technique

Sit in any comfortable meditative posture.

Hold the spine erect and close the eyes.

Breathe deeply.

Let the breath become deeper and more subtle.

Fix your awareness on the rhythmical flow of the breath.

Continue for a number of rounds.

Mentally synchronize the mantra *Om* with the breath.

The sound "O" should arise with inhalation.

The sound 'm-m-m-m-m' should arise with exhalation.

This sound should only be mental.

Breathe through the nose, keeping the mouth closed.

Continue in this manner with awareness of the flow of breath and the mantra.

Now fix your attention at the eyebrow center.

Feel that you are breathing in through that center with the mental sound "O".

Feel you are breathing out through that center, mentally chanting 'm-m-m-m-m'.

Continue with awareness of the breath, mantra and psychic center.

Focus your attention on mooladhara. With inhalation and the sound "O-o-o-o-o", feel the breath passing up through the spine, piercing all the chakras - mooladhara, swadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi, ajna, sahasrara.

With exhalation and the sound "m-m-m-m-m", feel the breath and sound moving down the spine, piercing all the chakras - sahasrara, ajna, vishuddhi, anahata, manipura, swadhisthana, mooladhara.

Continue for a number of rounds.

Again fix your attention at the eyebrow center.

Continue the mental repetition of *Om* synchronized with the breath, but do not be aware of the breath.

Only be aware of the mantra and the psychic center.

Feel the "O" and the "m-m-m-m-m" sound.

Continue in this manner for as long as possible.

Practice 4: Chakra yoga nidra

Yoga nidra can be used very effectively to develop your awareness of the chakras. Here is an example of a yoga nidra/relaxation session which includes visualization and rotation of awareness through the psychic centers. Teachers can adopt this practice directly for their classes. For personal use, someone can lead you through the practice, or you can put the instructions onto a tape.

Stage 1: Preparation

Place a folded blanket on the floor and lie on it in shavasana.

Loosen your clothing so you feel perfectly comfortable.

If necessary, cover yourself with a blanket to keep warm, or put a sheet over you to keep insects away.

The mouth and eyes should remain closed throughout the practice.

Make sure that the spinal column is straight, in line with the head and neck, and that the hips and shoulders are fully relaxed.

Keep the feet and legs slightly apart.

The arms should be beside your body but not touching, and the palms should be facing up.

Adjust your position so that you feel perfectly comfortable.

Tell yourself firmly that you will not move your body throughout the practice.

Stage 2: Sinking of the body

Look at the space in front of your closed eyes.

Imagine that the space surrounds your whole body.

Your body is immersed in that space.

Simultaneously be aware of your body.

It feels very light, as light as a leaf falling from a tree.

Imagine that your body is slowly sinking into the space that you see in front of your closed eyes, like a falling leaf.

Your body is slowly sinking into the infinite space.

Be aware of this feeling.

Continue in this manner for a few minutes.

Stage 3: Rhythmical breath awareness

Become aware of your breathing.

Awareness of the rise and fall of the navel with each breath.

As you breathe in, imagine that you are sucking in air through the navel.

As you breathe out, imagine that you are pushing air out from the navel.

It is a rhythmical process. Do not alter the natural breath in any way, just become aware of it.

Stage 4: Sankalpa

Repeat your *sankalpa* in a short positive sentence.

It should be the crystallization of your spiritual aspiration and you should not change it.

Repeat it with feeling, from the heart, not the lips. Repeat your *sankalpa* at least 3 times.

Stage 5: Visualization - body awareness

Now try to visualize your own body.

Imagine that you are viewing it from outside.

Feel that your perception is outside and your body is an object of study.

You may find visualization difficult - do not worry, just do your best.

If you wish, you can imagine that there is a large mirror suspended over your body and that your body is reflected in it.

Look at your own reflection.

See your whole body: feet, knees, thighs, abdomen, chest, both hands, arms, shoulders, neck, head, mouth, nose, ears, eyes, eyebrow center, your whole face and your whole body.

Combine your rotation of awareness with visualization of that part.

Continue in this manner for a few minutes.

Stage 6: Psychic centers - rotation of awareness

Now you have to discover the location of the chakras.

You have to develop awareness of each psychic center in the body.

Start from the base of the spine and move your awareness upward.

First become aware of mooladhara. In the male body it is situated in the perineum, between the anus and genitals, and in the female body it is located at the cervix - the mouth of the womb.

Try to feel the sensation at mooladhara. It is a very specific point which you are trying to isolate.

When you have found it, repeat mentally, 'mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara'.

Now move on to the second chakra, swadhisthana.

It is located at the base of the spine, in the coccyx.

Be aware of the sensation at that point and repeat mentally, 'swadhisthana, swadhisthana, swadhisthana'.

The third chakra is manipura.

It is located in the spine in line with the navel.

Feel this point and mentally repeat, 'manipura, manipura, manipura'.

Then become aware of anahata chakra, located in the spine, directly behind the center of the chest.

Try to locate that point exactly and mentally repeat, 'anahata, anahata, anahata'.

Now bring your awareness to vishuddhi chakra, situated in the spine, directly behind the throat pit. Feel the sensations arising at that point and mentally repeat, 'vishuddhi, vishuddhi, vishuddhi'.

The next chakra is ajna.

It is located at the very top of the spine in the region of the pineal gland, directly behind the eyebrow center.

Fix your awareness on that area and mentally repeat, 'ajna, ajna, ajna'.

Now bring your awareness to bindu, at the top back portion of the head.

Feel that tiny point as precisely as possible, and repeat mentally, 'bindu, bindu, bindu'.

Finally, become aware of sahasrara, at the crown of the head, and repeat mentally, 'sahasrara, sahasrara, sahasrara'.

Now repeat this process, slowly descending through the chakras in reverse order: sahasrara, bindu, ajna, vishuddhi, anahata, manipura, swadhisthana and mooladhara.

This is one complete round of chakra rotation.

Start a second round: mooladhara, swadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi, ajna, bindu, sahasrara; sahasrara, bindu, ajna, vishuddhi, anahata, manipura, swadhisthana, mooladhara.

This completes the second round.

Begin a third round, this time a little faster.

As you fix your attention at each point, try to feel a slight vibration there, a tiny pulsation.

If you wish, you can chant *Om* mentally as you locate each point in turn.

Practise at least 5 rounds and as many more as time permits.

Stage 7: Psychic centers - visualization

Now try to visualize the symbols of each chakra. This is not easy, but try.

You can use your own personal system of psychic symbols or the traditional chakra symbols as follows.

As each chakra is named, try to feel that point being lightly pressed by the thumb, and simultaneously visualize the symbol.

The psychic symbol for mooladhara is a deep red, four-petalled totus. Inside there is a smoky lingam around which a snake is coiled three and a half times with its head facing upward.

Try to visualize this symbol to the best of your ability and associate it with that particular location in the body.

Then proceed to swadhisthana chakra. The symbol is a six-petalled vermilion lotus, within which is depicted a starry night above the sea. The main focal point is the crescent moon.

Try to visualize this symbol.

Move to manipura chakra.

It is symbolized by a ten-petalled yellow lotus, and in the center is a blazing fire.

Visualize this symbol, imagining that the lotus is actually growing from manipura chakra.

Proceed to anahata chakra, represented by a twelve-petalled blue lotus.

In the center is a solitary flame burning in the darkness.

Try to visualize this symbol while feeling the exact position in the body.

Move to vishuddhi chakra, symbolized by a sixteen-petalled purple lotus.

In the middle there is a pure white drop of nectar. Visualize this location in the body.

Then proceed to ajna chakra which is symbolized by a two-petalled silver-grey lotus.

On the left hand petal is the full moon and on the right hand petal, a glowing sun. In the center is a black lingam and an *Om* sign.

Create a mental image of this symbol and its exact location.

Move on to bindu. It is symbolized by a tiny white drop of nectar.

Visualize this symbol at the top back of the head. Finally, move to sahasrara, the fountainhead of all the chakras.

It is represented by a thousand-petalled lotus. In the center is a white lingam.

Visualize this symbol at the crown of the head.

Now visualize all these symbols in the reverse order: sahasrara, bindu, ajna, vishuddhi, anahata, manipura, swadhisthana and mooladhara.

This is the end of one round.

Spend a few seconds visualizing each center.

Do a few more rounds according to the amount of time available.

Stage 8: Eyebrow center awareness

Fix your attention at the eyebrow center.

Feel your pulse at this point.

Become aware of its continuous rhythmical beat.

Mentally synchronize repetition of the mantra *Om* with this pulse.

Continue for a few minutes.

Stage 9: Sankalpa and close

Repeat your sankalpa 3 times with full emphasis and feeling.

Become aware of your natural breath.

Become aware of your whole physical body.

Become aware of the outer sense perceptions.

Slowly begin to move your body.

When you are fully returned to the external world, slowly sit up and open your eyes.

Practice 5 : Unmani mudra

The word *unmani* means, 'no mind' or 'thoughtlessness', and refers to the state which arises during meditation. Therefore, unmani mudra means, 'the gesture of thoughtlessness'.

Unmani mudra is an excellent practice for developing awareness of the chakras in the spine, from bindu down to mooladhara. It is also an integral part of many of the kriya yoga practices (nada, pawan and shabda sanchalana, maha mudra and maha bheda mudra), and therefore it should be mastered before attempting to learn and practise these techniques.

Unmani mudra is easy to learn, but not so easy to perfect. The technique is as follows:

Sit in any comfortable pose, with the back straight.

Open the eyes wide, without focusing on anything external.

First of all, fix your awareness at bindu.

Breathe in deeply.

Then as you breathe out, imagine your breath going down the spine.

Simultaneously, let your awareness descend the spine, passing through all the

chakras : ajna, vishuddhi, atiahata, manipura, swadhisthana, mooladhara, one after the other.

At the same time, the eyes should close slowly synchronized with the breath and the descent of awareness.

Though your eyes are open during the practice, your attention should be internalized on the chakras and breath; that is, the eyes are open, but you are looking inside.

The eyes should have closed at the end of exhalation and by the time your awareness reaches mooladhara chakra.

This is one round.

Breathe in and start the second round.

Do 11 rounds.

Note: While practising, you should not try too hard. Let it happen spontaneously. The practice is more mental than physical. Though the eyelids are slowly closed, the important thing is to feel the process mentally, and when the eyes are open, you should not perceive anything outside.

Practice 6: Bija mantra sanchalana

The word *bija* means "seed", *mantra* means "mystic sound" and *sanchalana* means "conduction". Therefore, this practice can be called "the conduction of the seed sound". It is one of the techniques of kriya yoga, but is not normally one of the twenty kriyas that we teach.

The practice is concerned with mentally repeating the bija mantra of each kshetram and chakra, one after the other, whilst simultaneously moving the awareness through each.

Psychic passages

In the following kriya, bija mantra sanchalana, as well as in a number of practices of kriya yoga, you will be required to move your awareness through two psychic passages called *arohan* and *awarohan*. The path of these passages is as follows :

Arohan, the ascending passage, goes from mooladhara chakra, forward to swadhisthana kshetram in the pubic area, then follows the curve of the belly to manipura kshetram, upward to anahata kshetram and vishuddhi kshetram in the front of the throat, then in a straight line to bindu at the top back of the head.

There is also another pathway for the arohan psychic passage that has been taught by tradition throughout the ages. On the ascent from mooladhara,

swadhisthana kshetram and onwards, the awareness is taken from vishuddhi kshetram to lalana chakra in the palate, then to the nosetip, to the eyebrow center, and following the curvature of the skull through sahasrara at the top of the head, to bindu at the back of the crown, where there is a little whorl of hair. In this book we will refer to the arohan passage as connecting vishuddhi kshetram directly to bindu, however, you can experiment with both passages and use whichever one suits you best.

Awarohan is the descending passage which starts at bindu, travels forward to ajna chakra, then down through sushumna in the spine, passing through all the chakras in turn to finally terminate at mooladhara.

In the following practice you will have to familiarize yourself with these two psychic passages, and this will also be useful as a preparation for the kundalini kriyas.

Bija mantras

The bija mantras for each kshetram and chakra are as follows:

mooladhara	<i>lam</i>
swadhisthana	<i>vam</i>
mianipura	<i>ram</i>
anahata	<i>yam</i>
vishuddhi	<i>ham</i>
ajna	<i>om</i>
bindu	<i>om</i>

Technique

Sit in any comfortable position, preferably siddhasana.

Keep your back straight and eyes closed.

Throughout the practice there is no physical movement; the kriya is done mentally.

Bring your attention to mooladhara chakra.

Repeat the mantra *lam* mentally, once, and try to feel the vibration at mooladhara chakra.

Then ascend through arohan.

Let your attention jump to swadhisthana kshetram and repeat the mantra *vam*, feeling the vibration at that point.

Jump to manipura kshetram and repeat the mantra *ram*.

At anahata kshetram, *yam*.

At vishuddhi kshetram, *ham*.

At bindu, *Om*.

Then descend through awarohan.

Repeat *Om* at ajna, in the center of the head.

Repeat *ham* at vishuddhi chakra in the spine.

At anahata chakra, *yam*.

At manipura chakra, *ram*.

At swadhisthana, *vam*.

Then return to the starting point, mooladhara, and begin the next round by repeating the mantra *lam*.

Your awareness should jump from one center to the next.

Do 9 rounds, or more if you have time.

Note: This is an excellent preparatory practice for kriya yoga sadhana. You may also practise by spending some time (e.g. 5 minutes) at each kshetram or chakra, chanting the mantra aloud on a low key and feeling it vibrating at the chakra.

Practice 7: Drawing the chakras

Drawing of mandalas, such as the chakras, is an important part of tantra. Many of the practices require that the correct mandalas be constructed first of all. The creation of a chakra diagram should be done with absolute awareness and concentration, and its measurements and dimensions must be exact. You should try to ensure that you will be undisturbed for at least an hour, and approach the exercise as you do meditation. In some Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, mandalas are drawn and painted as part of the daily sadhana, as is the practice in several Greek Orthodox monasteries, where icons are painted in minute detail as daily meditation.

Make sure you have all the necessary materials; pencils, pens, rubbers, ruler,

compass, colors or paints, so that you will not have to disturb your concentration once you have started. If you have a sadhana room, then that is the best place to create your mandalas. A good size for drawing the chakras on art paper is about 9" square, as this size is most useful for visual display and concentration practices. Larger and smaller sized chakras can be made for other purposes.

By first using only a black pen, one can plainly see the simple yet subtle lines and formations, and discover the hidden symbology as it becomes visually clearer in the mind. The next step is to color it, according to the traditional colors described in the text. In this way, mandalas of each of the seven chakras can be completed over seven or more sessions.

This practice is very relaxing and enjoyable. You may like to create more subjective and artistic impressions of the chakras, with your own colors and symbols, as you come to understand them in a personal way. This expands your awareness to the many possibilities of experiencing not only the chakras, but life itself.

The chakras should not be interpreted on just one or two levels, but in many dimensions. After drawing and painting the chakras successfully, you can then take the next step and create the chakras in a three-dimensional form. For this you can use any number of materials such as clay, plasticine, wire, fiberglass, copper or stone.

You must remember, however, that the traditional drawings are as subjective as your feelings and experiences of the chakra. Therefore, use these experiences to express your deeper and inner spiritual aspects on paper, in clay or stone. Through this you will find a clarity of vision arising out of what once seemed a confused and blurred picture of life.

Practise

You will not have time to do all the practices given in this chapter. Therefore we suggest that you practise the following for one month: Chakra meditation, chaturtha pranayama, chakra yoga nidra, immani mudra and bija mantra sanchalana daily.

Musical chakra meditation and drawing the chakras, can be done if you have the time and the inclination. They can be omitted without any detriment to arousing kundalini.

Practices for each individual chakra can be done as follows:

ajna - shambhavi mudra

mooladhara - moola bandha and nasikagra mudra

swadhisthana - vajroli (or sahajoli)

manipura - uddiyana bandha

anahata - ajapa japa

vishuddhi - jalandhara bandha and vipareeta karani asana

bindu - yoni mudra.

Then after one month you can start to learn kriya yoga, having first of all taken the advice of an experienced yoga teacher, or by writing to Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, Bihar, India.

KRIYA YOGA

There is a school of yoga which concerns itself with psychological circuits of mind and emphasizes one-pointedness of concentration in meditation and the withdrawal of the mind from external objects. This system of yoga has become very popular all over the world and most people know something about it. The method is to look at an object, close the eyes, withdraw the mind, forget everything, enter into meditation and pass into samadhi. This is a very popular system of meditation, but has anyone practiced it with success to this day?

If the practitioners of this type of meditation were brought to a scientist and be were to investigate the condition of their brain during this so-called meditation, it would reveal no remarkable change from normal consciousness. This would show that although their mind is withdrawn from external objects, the state they experience is not meditation but sleep.

Concentration of mind or meditation practiced with effort can never lead to real meditation, but only to tension and deep sleep. This is the problem of yoga and the problem everybody has come across who has been trying to practice meditation for a long time. But now I am going to talk about a different branch of yoga, which does not presuppose one-pointedness, concentration of mind or withdrawal of consciousness from external phenomena. This branch of yoga is kriya yoga.

Kriya yoga is one of the easiest and most powerful of the methods known to us in yoga. The kriya practices neither demand one steady pose nor concentration of the mind; even if one is unable to concentrate on one point and the mind is just jumping all about, it does not matter in kriya; we let it do so. In fact, in kriya you are not trying to withdraw your mind to one-pointedness, but you are actually trying to make movements, you create motion in the realm of your mind. In kriya you do not concentrate the mind but you move the mind from one point to another in particular order, which you should not lose sight of.

The word "kriya" means mental activity or activity of consciousness. In contrast to the other branches of yoga, in kriya you are not trying to quiet the mind, but to create activity to the mind. This brings about the development of certain parts of the brain, activity in the nervous system and awakening of mental energies.

The practices of kriya are described in the Sanskrit texts of tantric literature, a few of which were translated by Sir John Woodroffe and which are now available in

French, German and English. The total number of kriya practices is 76. Out of these, 27 are already known to most teachers of kriya. We can begin with 5 or 7 kriyas, but those who are eager to do kriya yoga itself will have to go through much preparation before they can even plan to learn it, or before they need a Teacher.

The preparations for kriya yoga are perfection of breath consciousness, discovery of the psychic passage and preliminary kriya methods. Also, the aspirant of kriya yoga should have proficiency in a few mudras and bandhas.

First, I will explain breath consciousness in a few words. With your eyes open or closed, with your mind concentrated or oscillating, in lotus posture, standing or sitting - as you like, just become aware of the fact "I am breathing in and I am breathing out". Keep this consciousness of breath uninterruptedly for 3 minutes at one stretch and then make a break. You don't have to sit separately or exclusively for meditation. Even now while you are listening to my speech you can maintain this awareness of your breath uninterruptedly and then after 3 minutes you can stop breath awareness.

When you are aware of breath you are aware of your mind; awareness of your breath is awareness of your own consciousness and it is awareness of your awareness. Whether you concentrate or not it does not matter, but remember the moment that you become aware of your mind, of your consciousness, and you are aware of your awareness. This point you must remember again and again.

The next preparation is to discover the psychic passage, the pathway or road through which the breath, or psychic consciousness, can flow up and down. The path is the spinal cord from the bottom to top, to the point where the pineal gland is situated. In this psychic path you practice the conscious breathing with eyes open, and most important you develop a consciousness of movement. There must be awareness of movement, up and down, and this movement is called kriya in yoga.

By this circulation of mind and consciousness from bottom to top and from top to bottom of the spinal cord, we awaken vitality and a magnetic current there; also we bring about revitalization of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system which control the whole nervous balance. So I have described one of the kriya practices. We pass our awareness from the bottom to the top of the spinal cord 50 times. This practice is very beneficial for people who suffer from mental breakdown, nervous imbalance, neurosis, anxiety and nervous trembling.

At the base of the spine there is a very important centre which in yoga is known as mooladbara cbakra, and it is situated in the perineum, i.e. in the area between the urinary and excretory systems. This is a very vital point and organ in the body.

The parasympathetic nervous system connects the brain with the rest of the body through two centres. One centre is this mooladbara cbakra, and from here impulses are conducted through the parasympathetic nervous system right into the brain. At the top of the spinal cord is the other very important conducting centre - the pineal gland, which in yoga we call the ajna chakra. Thus ajna chakra and mooladbara chakra are both carriers of impulses to the brain. The impulses travel through the parasympathetic nervous system, which controls the whole endocrine system of the body.

In addition to these two vital centres at the base and top of the spine there are other centres situated in the spinal cord; swadhisthana in the sacral region, manipura in the solar plexus region, anahata in the cardiac region and vishuddhi in the cervical region. These are four very vital centres in the body and these connect the brain with the body through the sympathetic nervous system.

The influx of our body sensations are carried from these four spinal centres via the sympathetic nervous system, and from the mooladhara and ajna centres via the parasympathetic nervous system to the brain. These centres carry shakti, or vital energy, and we stimulate this shakti by breathing in and out through this psychic path of the spine. The name of this practice, which is preparatory to kriya yoga, is ajapa japa.

The next preparation is the practice of mudras and bandhas. You must master them very well. The important bandhas are jalandhara bandha or locking the chin, uddiyana bandha or withdrawing the sacral plexus, and mooladhara bandha or moola bandha, or controlling the inflexions of the mooladhara chakra or the base centre. When one completes these preparations he can start the practice of kriya yoga with a master who knows the science very well and who can teach him what he needs out of the 76, or the 27 kriya techniques.

I have been engaged in much research into the influence of yoga on the human body and brain, and I have had some very encouraging results. For instance, I have sometimes given kriyas to people suffering from suicidal complexes and terrific neuroses. I did not teach them the whole of kriya yoga, but just one or two kriyas and from their practice they gained a new lease of life. I shall not go into deeper details of kriya yoga, but I shall just give you a very simple technique. Sit in any asana, the lotus or the siddhasana are best. Place both your hands on the knees and do nothing but concentrate on the perineum, the area between the excretory and the urinary systems. Very slowly contract it and then very slowly release it. Do this 50 times and then see what has happened to your depression. I wonder if you will suffer from depressions ever again.

This technique of moola bandha is not very difficult and is not actual kriya yoga, but it is most important in that it awakens the vitality or the pranashakti, which is lying dormant at the bottom point of the spine in all of us. This vitality is known as kundalini or the serpent power. I am giving this technique especially to those people suffering from nervous disorders and breakdowns, and the resulting tendency to commit suicide and to do all kinds of things to escape from life. I also suggest that people who have very restless and disturbed minds, who cannot concentrate even for a fraction of a second, should practice this technique. If, after practicing this, their mind is still agitated, they should try another exercise - vajroli. Here one concentrates on the lower abdomen or at the base of the urinary system and one slowly draws in the body there. Draw in the bladder, urinary system, kidneys and the whole of that area and then slowly relax it. One should contract and relax that area 25 times. Those who suffer from serious disorders, physical, mental and emotional, caused by sex neurosis or from problems with hormones, e. g. blocks in hormone secretions, should practice this particular kriya or movement. This is because the pituitary gland, known in yoga as sahasrara chakra (the thousand petalled lotus) is directly connected with the functioning of the urinary system, the

kidneys and the genito-ovarian system. The posterior lobe of the pituitary produces two kinds of sex hormones, and by doing this particular kriya you not only control these particular organs in the lower body but you also control and regulate the hormone secretion in the brain.

There is nothing secret in kriya yoga. I could tell you everything about it tonight, but one night is not enough. I need at least 7 days to teach you, and for certain I shall not teach it to you on this visit.

But it is a common idea there is something secret in kriya yoga which the masters keep to themselves, and that everybody is not qualified for kriya yoga practice. This is a myth. Also, it is commonly believed kriya yoga should not be practiced by householders, by married people who do not keep brahmacharya or so-called celibacy. If this were so, I think that not only no man in Denmark but no man in the whole world would be qualified for kriya yoga.

It is my belief the state of celibacy is unrelated to sexual life, but that brahmacharya means the conservation of the highest vitality not in the genital region but in the brain. The posterior pituitary produces hormones which are conducted to the gonads and ovaries and these produce the whole of what we call the marital and sexual life. It is therefore what happens in the brain which is of great importance, not what you lose in the sexual act. These hormones within the brain can be preserved not by so-called brahmacharya or philosophy, but only by concentration or meditation or by the very powerful forms of vitality generated through kriya yoga.

Therefore it is a complete misunderstanding that kriya yoga, or any other yoga, is only for unmarried people and forbidden for those leading the marital life. It is not at all so. In the system of tantra, which contains much concerning kriya yoga, this is stated very clearly. It says, "Whether those who aspire to the awakening of the great shakti in themselves are married or unmarried, they are qualified for initiation into the practice» of kriya yoga".

I have been conducting classes for years on concentration and meditation, and also classes in kriya yoga. There seems to be a remarkable difference between the two. After 5 minutes of concentration and meditation, people start scratching and moving, and simply get tired. But when in kriya yoga I ask them not to close their eyes or concentrate, and to move their body when they like, you will be surprised to hear that after 12 minutes they close their eyes and go into meditation and I have to pull them out of meditation. It is the remarkable difference between the systems of concentration and meditation and kriya yoga, which involves the movement of consciousness.

In kriya yoga there are certain techniques for movement of consciousness, when I will ask you: "Please do not close your eyes during these exercises," but I assure you after 15 minutes your eyes will be closed and if I ask you what you are doing you will say "Swamiji, I am in a mood of meditation I cannot go further with this kriya. It is impossible." I say "No, please keep your eyes open and do not go into meditation. Remain out, do not go in." But you will say "Swamiji, please let me go in, I can't remain out." Have you ever known a system of meditation like kriya yoga, where in spite of the pull of the guru, the disciple is just pushing himself inside?

Kriya yoga practices are casual, neither very systematic nor very serious. You do not sit down and tense your body, no! The kriyas are as casual as when you talk to your son or husband or wife or when you read some book. In that same casual, relaxed way you sit down and start moving your consciousness.

What I am about to say is not in favour of L.S.D., don't mistake me, but those who have had L.S.D. experiences, when they practice kriya yoga, say that at the end of kriya practice they have a very good trip. But whereas the L.S.D. trip is not under one's control, in kriya yoga he is in complete control. Just as the astronauts are brought back from the moon, you can bring your mind back from its heightened state to normal work at any moment. In kriya, the bindings of time and space are transcended but not the awareness; you are not lost in that so-called unknown and delusive eternity, your feet are completely and firmly planted. If you have no particular job to do, and no responsibility and obligation towards your family, job and business, the moment you have finished kriya yoga practices you can sit in meditation for 10 hours, no problem; and if you do have responsibilities towards your family, job and children, then you are quite ready to take part in day to day life again. It is in this that the trip is completely under your control.

When I first came across kriya yoga it was a very wonderful experience, but I did not teach it because I thought people were not in need of this science. One day a very unfortunate lady of very high family came to me. She asked if I had a way in yoga for committing suicide. I invited her to come and visit me if she liked, and sometimes in the morning when I used to practice a few items of kriya yoga, she also practiced them for 15 to 20 minutes. This was many, many years ago, and now she has become one of the happiest women I have ever seen in my life, and she has not become useful to herself alone but to thousands of people through community work. The money which she was wasting in clubs and other diversions, she is now investing in most useful projects. It is my belief that the whole change in her personality and its awakening and revival were due only to the few very insignificant kriyas which she practiced with me during those 2 or 3 months.

So there are two different systems of yoga. One is the concentration, meditation and samadhi achieved by withdrawal of the mind from external life. If you can do this system, please go on with it, but if you cannot and your mind plays up like a rebellious child, then it is much better to adopt the second system and thereby preclude any friction and difficulty with the mind. Take a few kriyas, not many - 5 to 10, and these will help you to deal directly with the rebellious mind.

When I was in Paris this year, I gave kriya yoga classes for 3 days. The people were so greatly benefited that after only 3 months they want me to give more classes in kriya to hundreds of students. When I asked them what made them decide to call me back to Paris so soon, the reply was, "The kriya yoga my uncle, my brother or my husband has been practicing has created such a great change in his life that I also want to learn and be benefited by kriya." This is the reply of the people in Paris where I gave the first kriya classes outside India.

Those who are eager to follow this systematic kriya yoga path should first practice asanas, pranayamas, some hatha yoga, some preliminary kriyas, ajapa

japa, breath consciousness, mudras and bandhas regularly for 4 or 5 months and then they should learn kriya yoga from a qualified master.

Diet, status, creed or religious affiliations, age (young or old), mental condition (normal or abnormal), none of these are a barrier to kriya practice. If you are convinced that kriya yoga is for you, you should take it up. Start the preparations immediately.

Kriya yoga is part of tantra and it is on the subject of *Tantra Shastra* I shall speak tomorrow evening. Then you will know how close you are to a science given to mankind more than 6000 years ago, and you will understand how, in this age of tensions, dissensions and all kinds of social and mental problems, the tantra system but kriya yoga above all, can help us in our physical and mental difficulties and finally in the unfoldment of our consciousness.

The Kriya Yoga Practices

By tradition there are a total of 76 kundalini kriyas of kriya yoga. We present the following 20 main practices, which are sufficient for the daily practice of any sincere sadhaka.

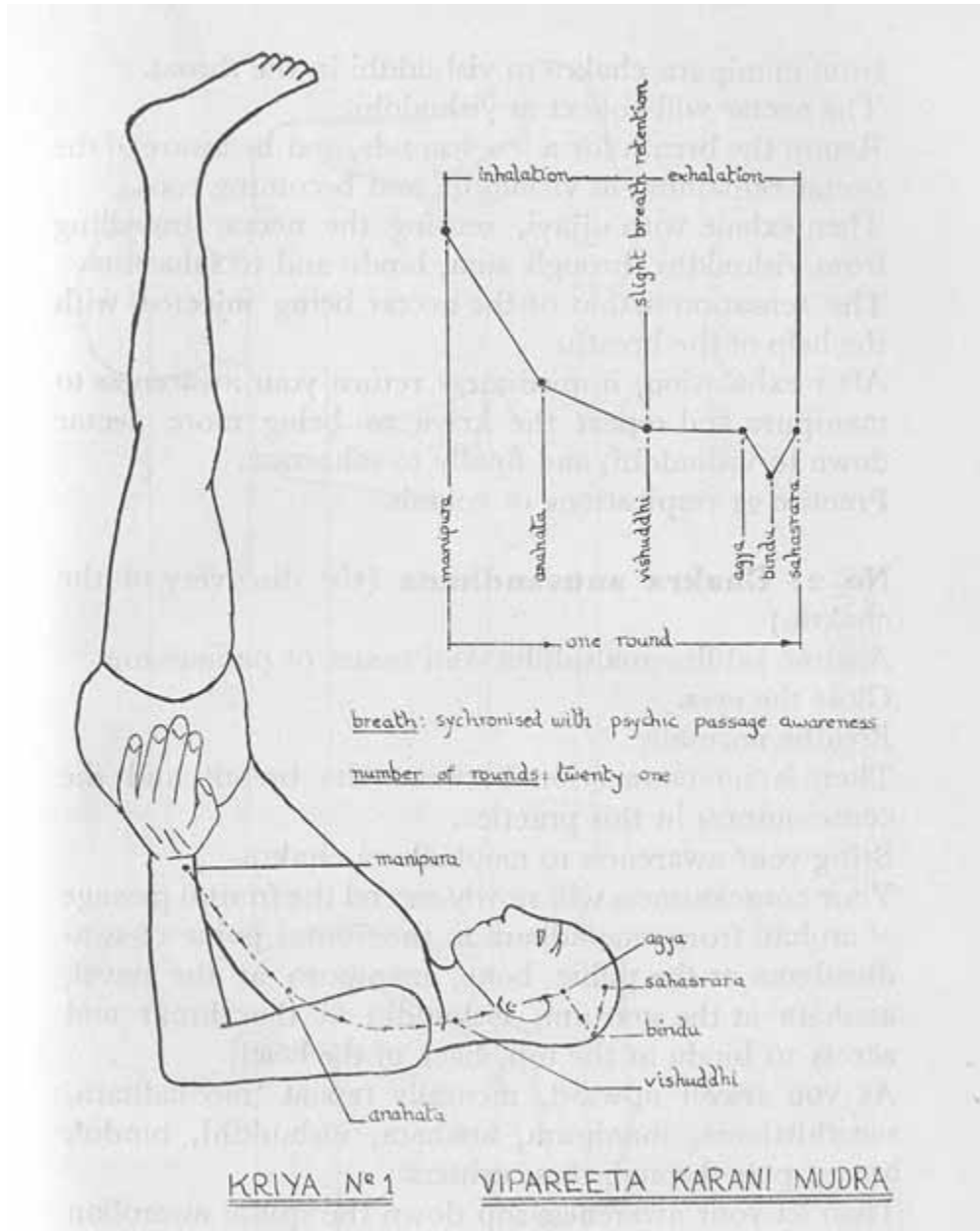
The practices are divided into three groups: those which induce pratyahara, those which induce dharana, and those which induce dhyana. It should be noted that these three states are actually a continuity of evolution, that is, the consciousness flows from one to the next without any apparent dividing point - so these practices should be done in an unbroken sequence. Of course, from the first day, the practice of these kriyas will not necessarily lead to such exalted states of awareness, but if they are practised properly with correct guidance, by an aspirant who is ready for them, then most likely, one day they will. It will be at that stage that the constant, unbroken progression of awareness will become essential. Remember, you should learn one kriya per week.

PRATYAHARA PRACTICES

№ 1: Vipareeta karani mudra (the attitude of inversion)

Assume vipareeta karani asana (described in chapter 9).

The chin should not touch the chest.



Kriya N°1 Vipareeta Karani Mudra

Practise subtle ujjayi pranayama.

Be sure that your legs are completely vertical.

Close your eyes.

Inhale with ujjayi and simultaneously feel a hot stream of amrit or nectar flowing through the spinal passage from manipura chakra to vishuddhi in the throat.

The nectar will collect at vishuddhi.

Retain the breath for a few seconds, and be aware of the nectar remaining at vishuddhi and becoming cool.

Then exhale with ujjayi, sensing the nectar travelling from vishuddhi through ajna, bindu and to sahasrara.

The sensation is that of the nectar being injected with the help of the breath.

After exhalation, immediately return your awareness to manipura and repeat the kriya to bring more nectar down to vishuddhi, and finally to sahasrara.

Practise 21 respirations or rounds.

№ 2: Chakra anusandhana (the discovery of the chakras)

Assume siddhasana/siddha yoni asana or padmasana.

Close the eyes.

Breathe normally.

There is no connection between the breath and the consciousness in this practice.

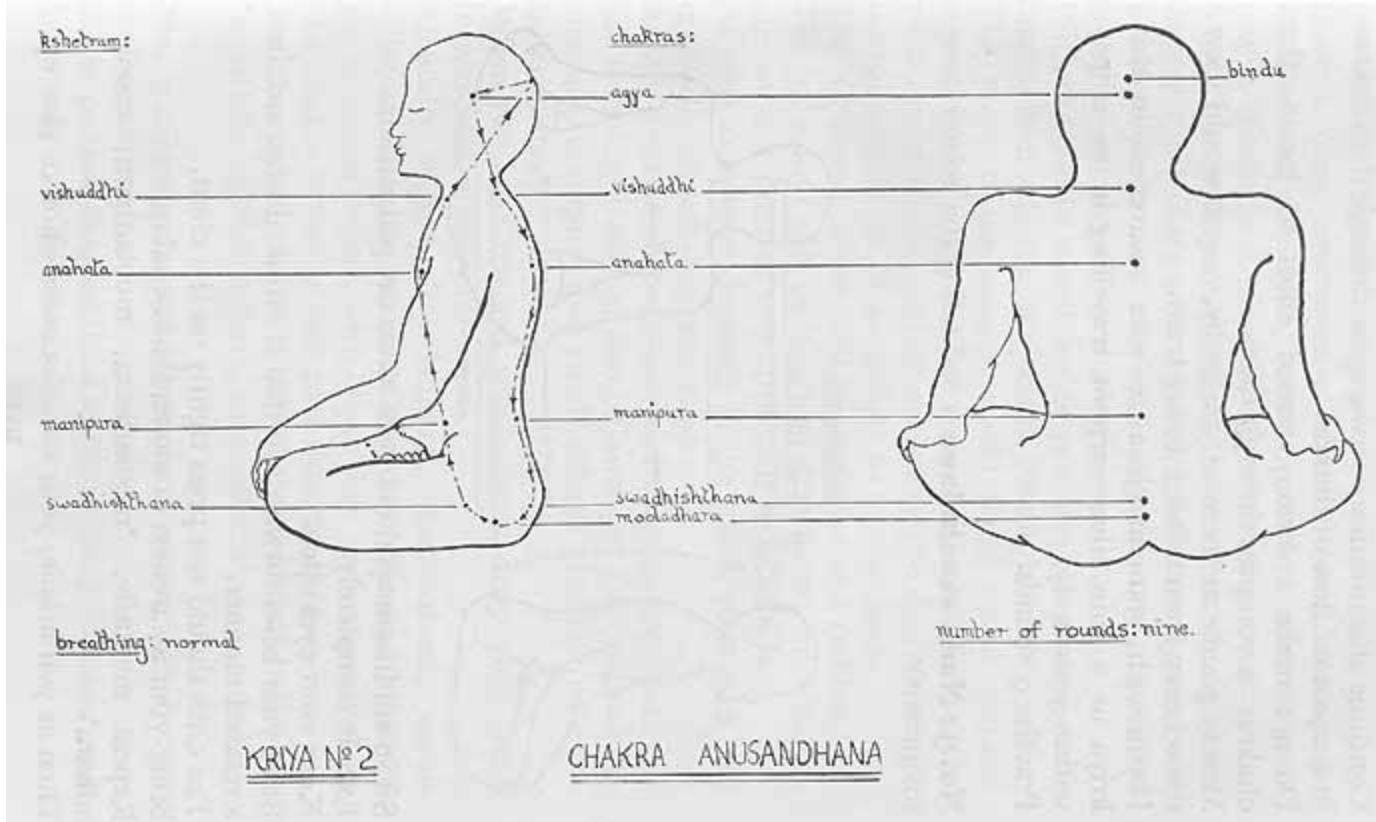
Bring your awareness to mooladhara chakra.

Your consciousness will slowly ascend the frontal passage of arohan from mooladhara to the frontal point of swadhisthana at the pubic bone, manipura at the navel, anahata at the sternum, vishuddhi at the throat and across to bindu at the top, back of the head.

As you travel upward, mentally repeat "mooladhara, swadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi, bindu", as you pass through these centers.

Then let your awareness slip down the spinal avarohan passage from bindu to mooladhara, mentally repeating "ajna, vishuddhi, anahata, manipura, swadhisthana, mooladhara" as you pass through these centers.

From mooladhara, immediately start ascending in the frontal passage as before, mentally reciting the chakra names as you ascend, starting with swadhisthana.



Kriya N°2 Chakra anusadhana

Continue this rotation of awareness through the chakras in a constant flow of rounds.

Do not make a serious, tensed effort to locate the chakras as you pass through them.

Merely glance at them as you go by, as you would view the scenery from a fast moving train.

If you wish, you can visualize your awareness in this kriya as a thin silver serpent travelling in an ellipse within your body.

Practise 9 rounds.

N° 3: Nada sanchalana (conducting the sound consciousness)

The power of the awareness will build up as you are repeating the word "bindu" and it will explode into the vocal chant of *Om*, which will carry you down through the spinal passage of *awarohan* to *mooladhara*.

The "O" sound of *Om* will be explosive and sudden.

The "m" sound will be long and drawn out, culminating almost in a buzz as you approach *mooladhara*.

As your awareness descends in the spine, your eyes will gradually close in *unmani mudra*.

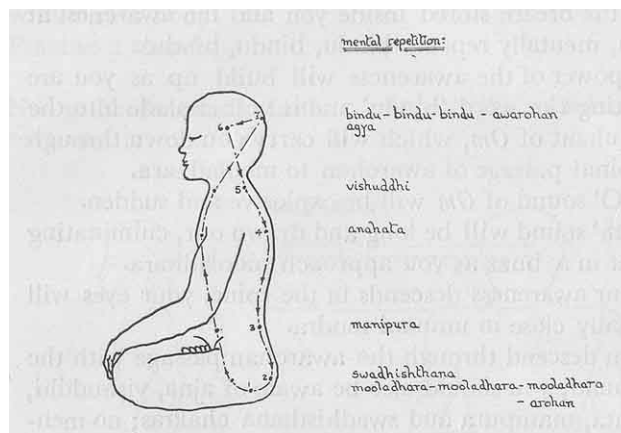
As you descend through the *awarohan* passage with the *Om* sound, you should also be aware of *ajna*, *vishuddhi*, *anahata*, *manipura* and *swadhishthana* chakras; no mental repetition.

When you have reached *mooladhara*, drop your head forward and open your eyes.

Mentally repeat, "*mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara*", with the breath retained outside and start on the ascent as before, with inhalation and repetition of the chakra names as you pass through them.

Practise 13 full rounds or breaths and end after the last "*mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara*."

№ 4: Pawan sanchalana (conducting the breath consciousness)



Sit in *padmasana*, *siddhasana* or *siddha yoni asana*, and keep your eyes closed.

Practise *khechari mudra* throughout this *kriya*. Exhale completely and bend your head forward as in *nada sanchalana*.

Become aware of *mooladhara* and repeat mentally, '*mooladhara, mooladhara,*

mooladhara'. Then mentally say 'arohan' once and begin your ascent through the frontal passage with a subtle ujjayi inhalation.

As you ascend, be aware of the chakras as you pass through them and repeat their names mentally.

As your awareness moves from vishuddhi to bindu, your head should slowly rise until it leans slightly backward as in nada sanchalana.

At bindu mentally repeat, "bindu, bindu, bindu".

Then say "awarohan" mentally and descend through the spinal passage with ujjayi exhalation, mentally reciting the name of each chakra as you pass through it.

As you descend, your eyes will close very gradually to form unmani mudra, the attitude of drowsiness.

At mooladhara they will be closed.

Then open your eyes and bend your head forward.

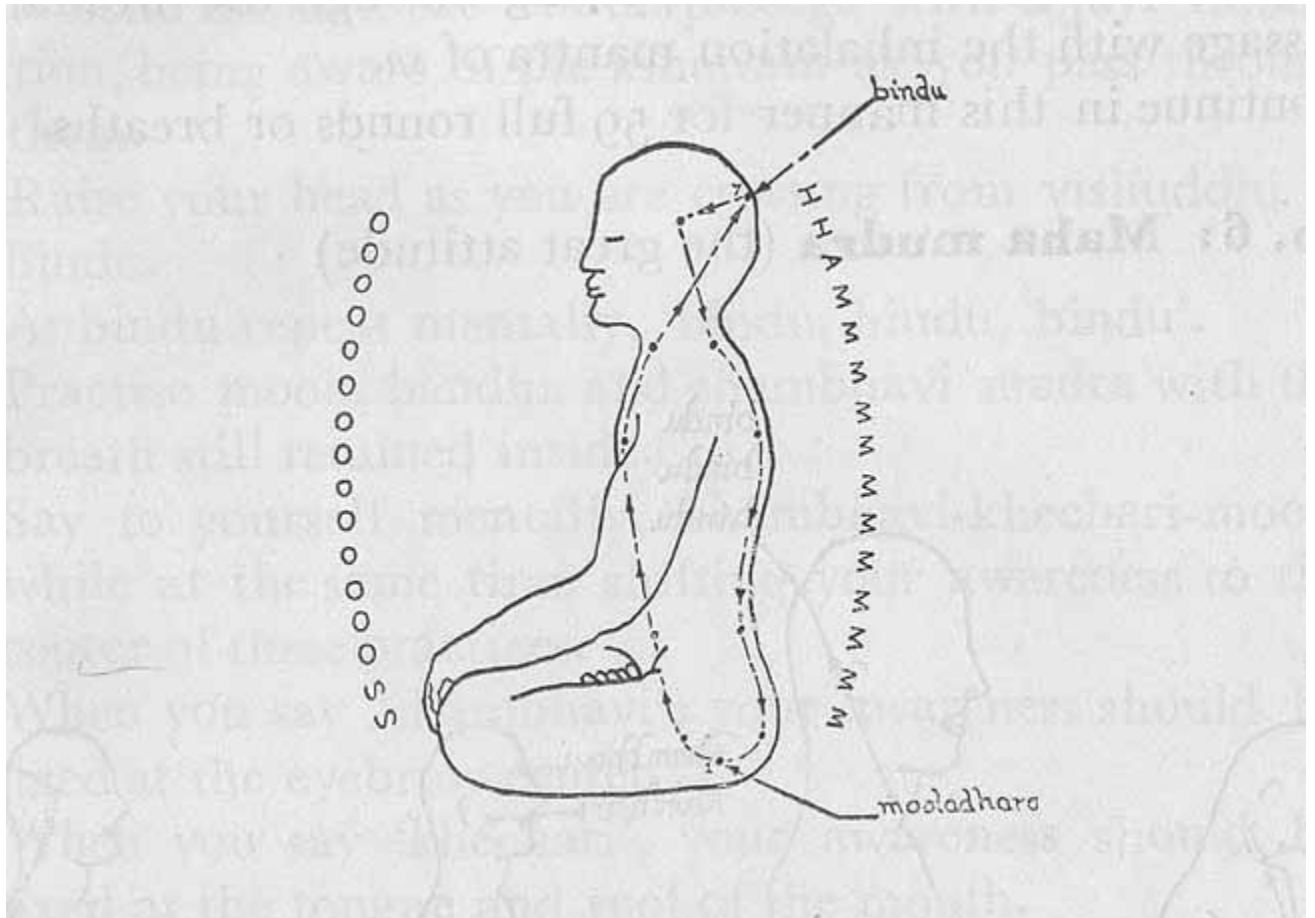
Repeat mentally "mooladhara,mooladhara, mooladhara".

Again begin your ascent with ujjayi inhalation, as before.

Practise 49 rounds or complete breaths.

After the last "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara", open your eyes and end the practice.

No. 5: Shabda sanchalana (conducting the word consciousness)



Sit in siddhasana, siddha yoni asana or padmasana. Keep your eyes open and practise khechari mudra throughout the kriya.

Exhale completely, bend your head forward and become aware of mooladhara chakra for a few seconds.

Inhale with ujjayi and ascend the frontal passage.

As you ascend, be aware of the sound of the breath which takes the form of the mantra *so*.

Simultaneously, be aware of each kshetram, without mental repetition.

As you travel from vishuddhi to bindu, the head will move upward as in pawan sanchalana and nada sanchalana.

Then, with the breath retained inside, be aware of bindu for a few seconds.

Then descend the spinal passage doing unmani mudra and being simultaneously aware of the natural sound of exhalation and the mantra *ham*.

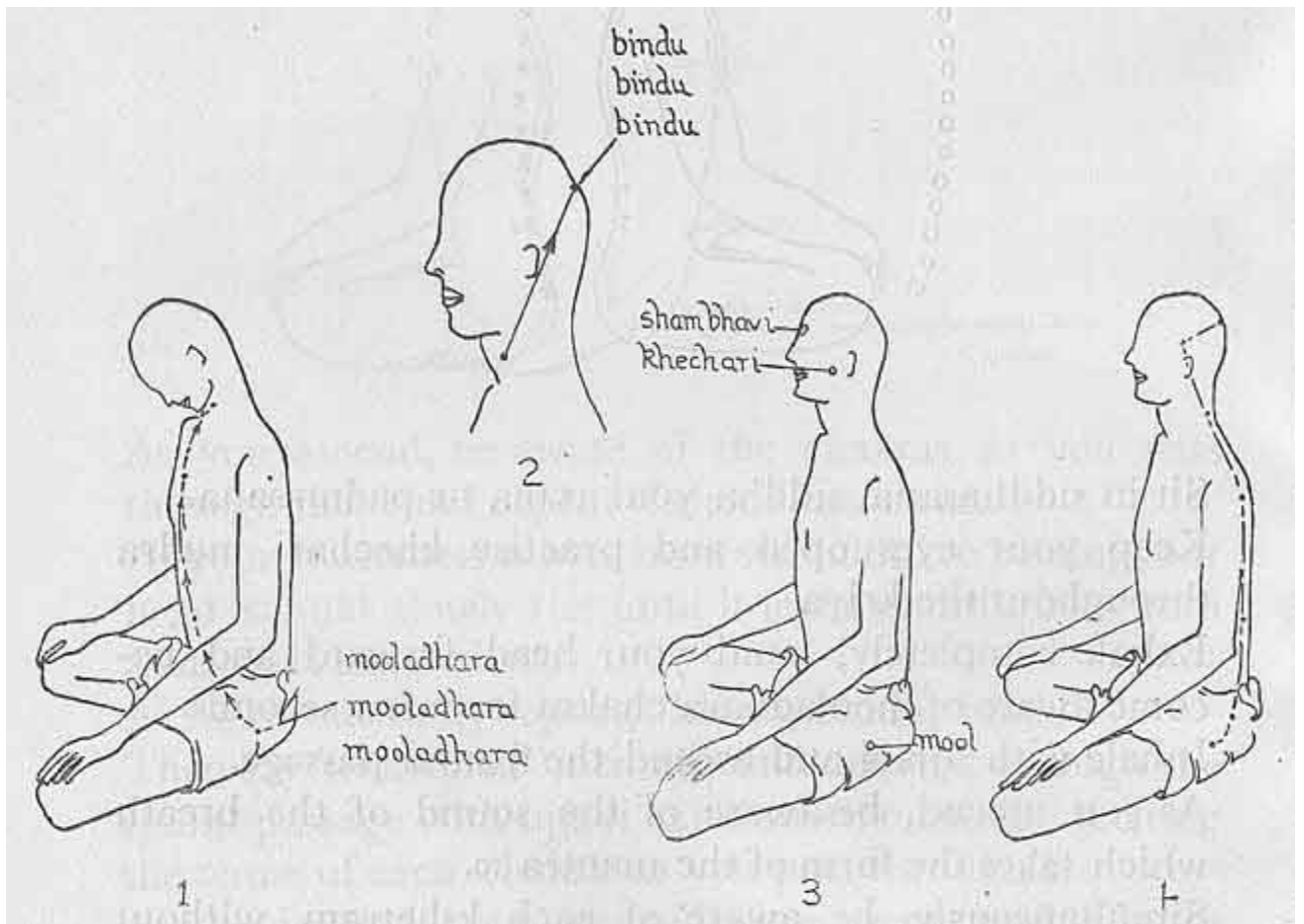
Be aware of each chakra without repetition of its name.

After reaching mooladhara, open the eyes and lower your head.

Begin your ujjayi inhalation, rising through the frontal passage with the inhalation mantra of so.

Continue in this manner for 59 full rounds or breaths.

No. 6: Maha mudra (the great attitude)



This kriya can either be practised in perfect siddhasana or siddha yoni asana, or in the asana known as utthan padasana. If maha mudra is to be practised in siddhasana, then it should be done as follows:

Sit in siddhasana or siddha yoni asana, with the heel of the lower foot pressing firmly in towards mooladhara chakra.

Practise khechari mudra, exhale completely and bend your head forward.

Keep your eyes open.

Repeat mentally, "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara".

Ascend through the frontal passage with ujjayi inhalation, being aware of the kshetram as you pass through them.

Raise your head as you are crossing from vishuddhi to bindu.

At bindu repeat mentally, "bindu, bindu, bindu".

Practise moola bandha and shambhavi mudra with the breath still retained inside.

Say to yourself mentally, "shambhavi - khechari - mool", while at the same time shifting your awareness to the center of these practices.

When you say "shambhavi", your awareness should be fixed at the eyebrow center.

When you say "khechari", your awareness should be fixed at the tongue and roof of the mouth.

When you say "mool", your awareness should be fixed at mooladhara chakra.

Beginners should repeat this shifting of awareness 3 times. Advanced aspirants can rotate their awareness up to 12 times.

Then, first release shambhavi mudra, then moola bandha.

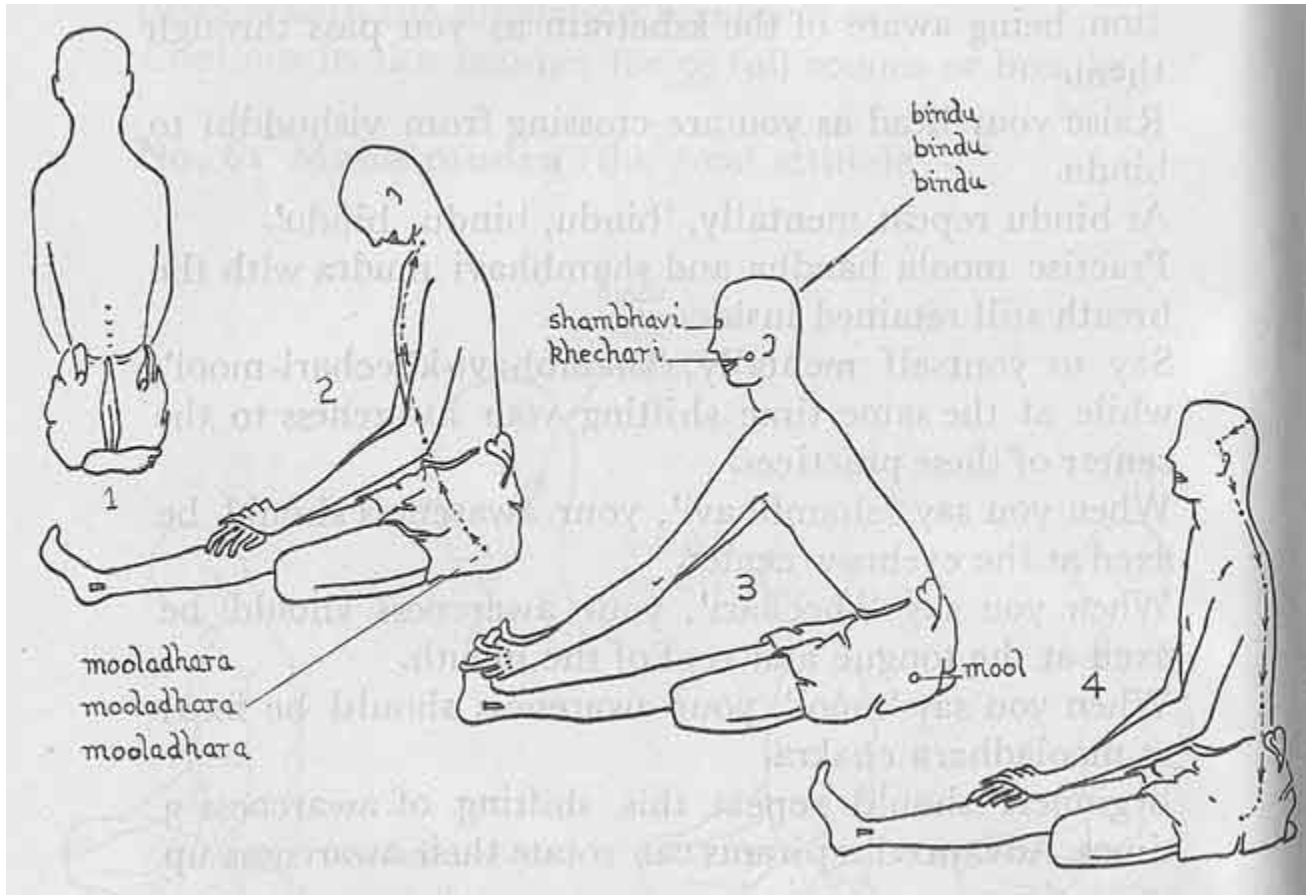
Bring your awareness back to bindu and travel down your spinal passage to mooladhara, with ujjayi exhalation and unmani mudra, and be aware of the chakras as you pass through them.

On reaching mooladhara, bend your head forward.

Then repeat "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara" and ascend the frontal passage with ujjayi inhalation, as before.

Practise 12 rounds or breaths and end after the last "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara".

Alternative practice in utthan padasana



When practising maha mudra in utthan padasana, a slight change must be made in the technique.

After ascending to bindu, repeat "bindu, bindu, bindu".

Lean forward and hold the big toe of your extended foot with the fingers of both hands, to form utthan padasana.

The stretched knee must not bend.

Now practise moola bandha and shambhavi mudra.

Repeat, "shambhavi - khechari - mool" from 3 to 12 times, passing your awareness to the seats of these practices as you repeat their names.

Release shambhavi, then moola bandha, then utthan padasana, and place your hands back on your knee.

Bring your consciousness back to bindu, and then descend the spinal passage with the ujjayi exhalation and unmani mudra.

If maha mudra is practised with utthan padasana, then practise 4 rounds with the

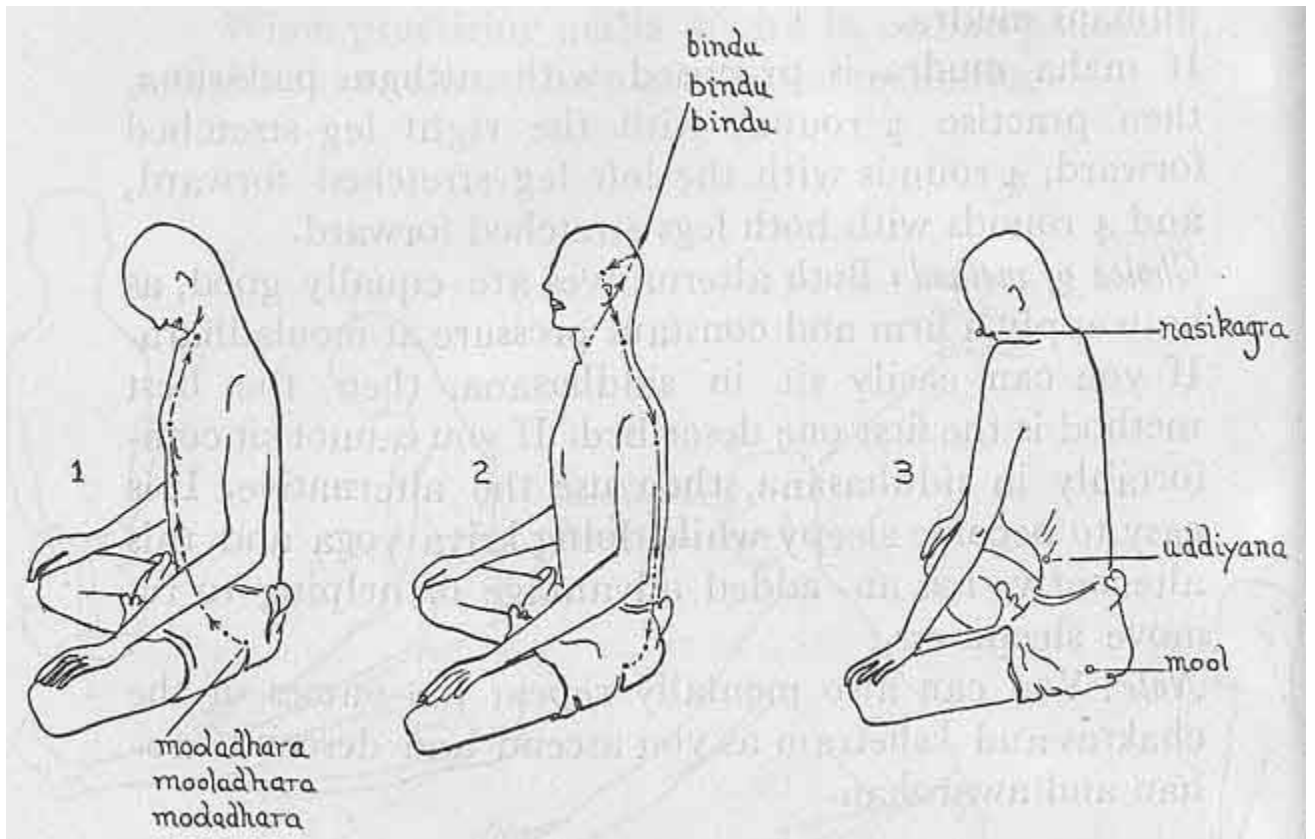
right leg stretched forward, 4 rounds with the left leg stretched forward, and 4 rounds with both legs stretched forward.

Choice of method: Both alternatives are equally good, as both apply a firm and constant pressure at mooladhara.

If you can easily sit in siddhasana, then the best method is the first one described. If you cannot sit comfortably in siddhasana, then use the alternative. It is easy to become sleepy while doing kriya yoga and this alternative has an added advantage of helping to remove sleepiness.

Note: You can also mentally repeat the names of the chakras and kshetram as you ascend and descend arohan and awarohan.

No. 7: Maha bheda mudra (the great piercing attitude)



This mudra can either be practised in perfect siddhasana, siddha yoni asana, or in utthan padasana, as with maha mudra. If practised in siddhasana or siddha yoni asana, the technique is as follows:

Practise khechari mudra and keep your eyes open and head down.

Exhale completely.

Repeat mentally, "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara".

Inhale with ujjayi as you ascend the frontal passage to bindu.

As you ascend from vishuddhi to bindu, raise your head.

Repeat mentally, "bindu, bindu, bindu", and then descend the spinal passage to mooladhara with ujjayi exhalation and unmani mudra.

Be sure to notice the chakras as you pass through them.

Then practise jalandhara bandha with the breath retained outside.

Practise moola bandha, uddiyana bandha and nasikagra drishti.

Repeat mentally, "nasikagra-uddiyana-mool", while simultaneously placing your awareness at the seats of these practices in turn.

Repeat this cycle of awareness 3 times if you are a beginner, or up to 12 times if you are experienced.

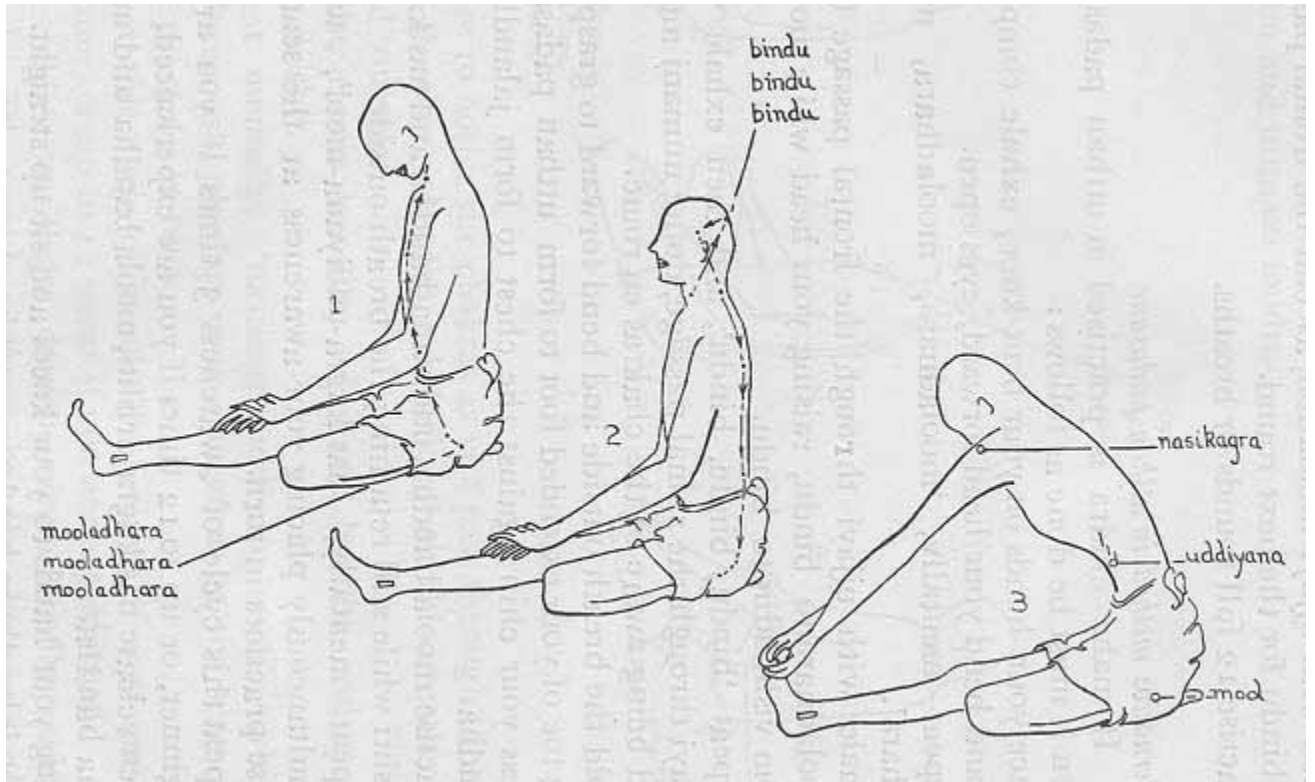
Then release nasikagra drishti, moola bandha, uddiyana bandha and jalandhara bandha, but keep the head down.

Bring your awareness back to mooladhara. Repeat the mantra "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara", mentally.

Then with ujjayi inhalation, ascend the frontal passage to bindu for the next round.

Practise 12 full rounds or breaths.

Alternative method in utthan padasana



If maha mudra is practised in utthan padasana, then it must be done as follows:

Place your hands on your bent knee, exhale completely and bend your head forward, eyes open.

Repeat mentally, "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara".

Inhale with ujjayi through the frontal passage from mooladhara to bindu, raising your head while moving from vishuddhi to bindu.

Repeat "bindu, bindu, bindu", and then exhale with ujjayi through the spinal passage, doing unmani mudra and being aware of the chakras en route.

Hold the breath outside and bend forward to grasp the big toe of your extended foot to form utthan padasana.

Press your chin against the chest to form jalandhara bandha.

Practise moola bandha, uddiyana bandha and nasikagra drishti while still retaining the breath outside.

Repeat mentally, "nasikagra - uddiyana - mool", while simultaneously placing your awareness at the seats of these practices in turn.

Repeat this cycle of awareness 3 times if you are a beginner, or up to 12 times if you are experienced.

Then release nasikagra drishti, moola bandha and uddiyana bandha.

Bring your hands to your knees and sit up straight. Release jalandhara but keep your head bent down.

Bring your awareness back to mooladhara.

Repeat the mantra "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara", and then ascend the frontal passage with ujjayi inhalation.

Practise in this way for 4 full rounds or breaths with your right leg extended, then practise 4 times with the left leg extended, and finally 4 times with both legs extended.

After the fourth time in each position, ascend once to bindu with ujjayi inhalation. Repeat the bindu mantra, descend to mooladhara and repeat its mantra, relax and then change legs.

Note: The rotation of awareness through nasikagra, uddiyana and mool is done with outside retention of the breath at mooladhara. You are advised to practise only 3 rotations at first, slowly increasing one rotation per week until you can complete 12 rotations.

* Make sure that all the bandhas are performed correctly and in the right sequence. At first you will have to pay special attention to this, but with regular practice the bandhas will lock and tighten automatically, without effort and at the right stages of the kriya.

* Noretip gazing helps to tighten the lock of the bandhas. Make sure that nasikagra drishti and the bandhas are practised simultaneously and that you do not omit any of them while rotating awareness through the centers. Do not strain.

* If you are feeling pain or discomfort in the eyes, stop nasikagra drishti but continue the bandhas and rotation of awareness. Slowly increase the duration of nasikagra as the eye muscles adapt to the practice.

* You can repeat the "mooladhara" mantra 3 times before applying the bandhas as well as repeating 'mooladhara' 3 times at the beginning of a new round.

* Also, the names of the chakras and kshetram can be mentally repeated as you ascend and descend arohan and awarehan.

No. 8: Manduki kriya (the frog attitude)

Sit in bhadrasana, the gentleman's pose.

Your eyes should remain open.

The area of your body below mooladhara chakra must touch the ground. If it doesn't, then use a cushion to exert pressure on this point.

Place your hands on your knees and practise nasikagra drishti.

Become aware of your natural breath flowing in and out of your nostrils.

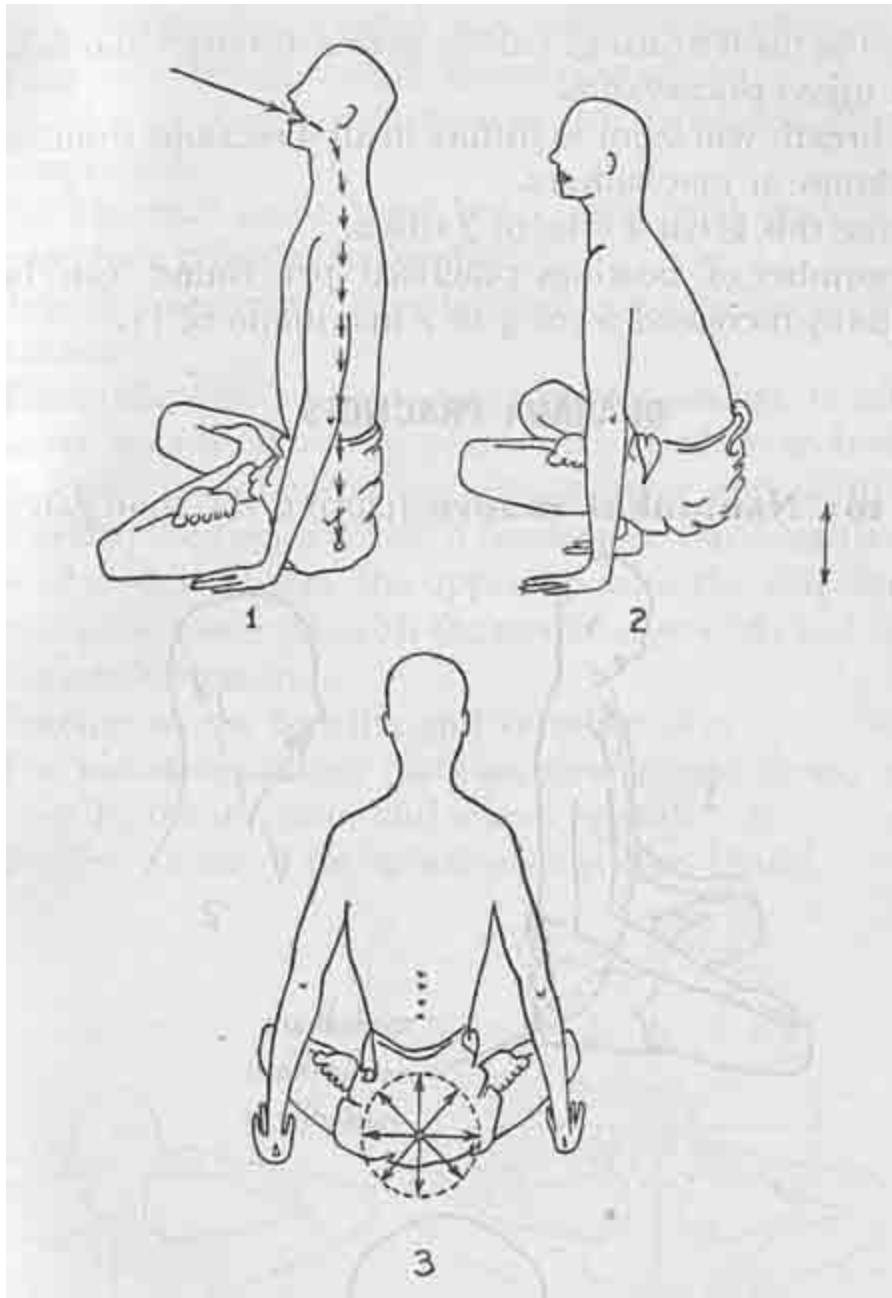
With inhalation the breath flows through both nostrils and merges at the eyebrow center. As you exhale the two flows diverge from the eyebrow center and move out through both nostrils.

The breath follows a conical or inverted V-shaped pathway. Feel this.

Simultaneously, be aware of all smells.

The point of this kriya is to smell the aroma of the astral body which has a scent like that of sandalwood.

If your eyes become tired, close them for some time and then resume nasikagra drishti.



Practise this kriya until it becomes intoxicating.

Do not carry it so far that you become totally absorbed in it and do not wish to end the practice.

No. 9: Tadan kriya (beating the kundalini)

Sit in padmasana with the eyes open.

Place your palms on the floor at the sides of your body, next to your hips, with the fingers pointing forward.

Tilt your head

slightly backward and practise shambhavi mudra.

Inhale through your mouth in audible ujjayi pranayama.

As you inhale, feel the breath travelling downward through a tube connecting the mouth to mooladhara chakra.

The breath will collect at mooladhara chakra.

Hold the breath, keep your awareness at mooladhara and practise moola bandha.

Using your hands, lift your body off the ground.

Then drop your body lightly so that mooladhara is gently beaten.

Repeat this beating a few times.

Do not practise this quickly or harshly.

After the third beating, exhale gently through the nose with ujjayi pranayama.

The breath will seem to diffuse in all directions from its storehouse at mooladhara.

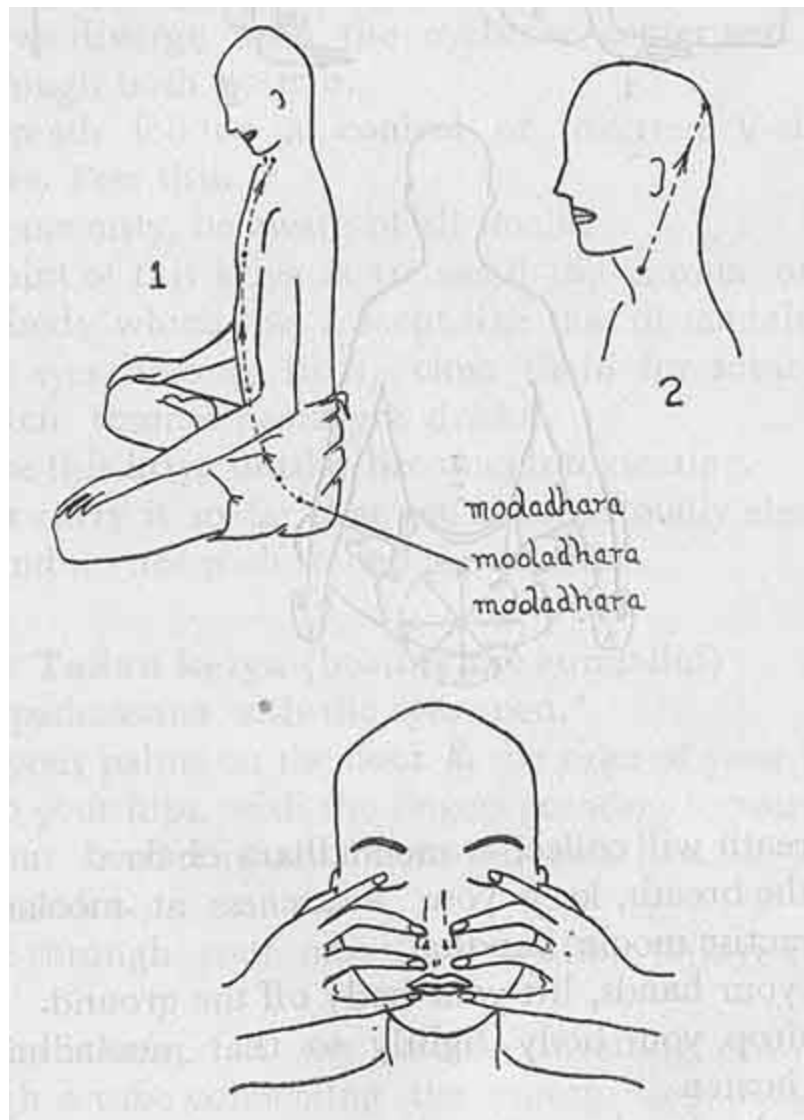
Practise this kriya a total of 7 times.

The number of beatings practised per round can be gradually increased from 3 to a maximum of 11.

DHARANA PRACTICES

**No. 10: Naumukhi
mudra** (closing the nine
gates)

Sit in siddhasana,
siddha yoni asana or
padmasana.



Your eyes should remain closed throughout.

If necessary, use a cushion to ensure that mooladhara is compressed.

Do khechari mudra and bend your head slightly forward (not jaiandhara bandha).

Repeat mentally, "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara".

Then inhale with ujjayi up the frontal passage to bindu.

Raise your head as you pass from vishuddhi to bindu, practise yoni mudra by closing your ears with the thumbs, the eyes with both forefingers, the nostrils with your middle fingers, the upper lip with the ring fingers and your lower lip with the small fingers (do not apply too much pressure).

Practise moola bandha and vajroli mudra.

The nine gates of the body are now closed (eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, anus and sexual organ).

Become aware of the spinal passage and bindu.

Now visualize a shining copper trident (trishul), rooted in mooladhara with its stem in the spinal cord and the prongs extending upward from vishuddhi.

The prongs are very sharp.

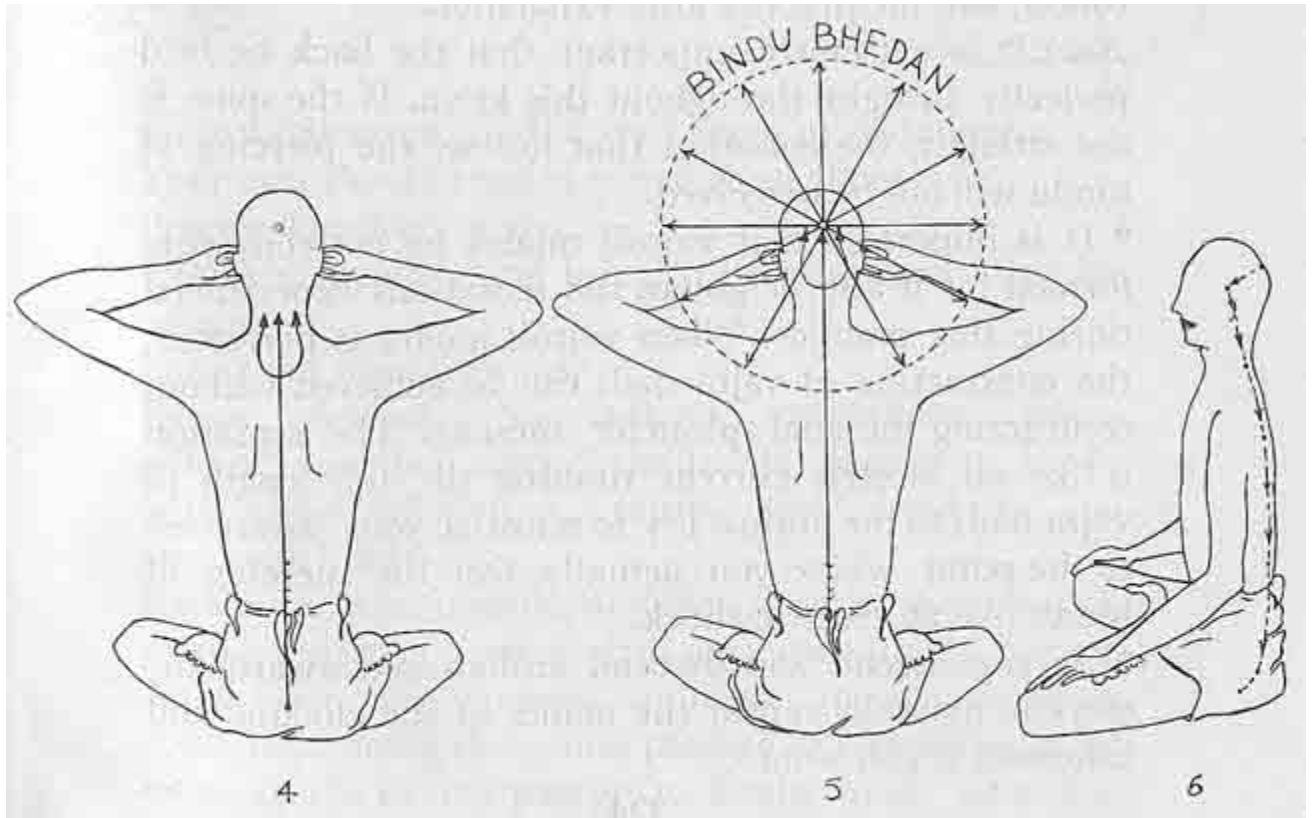
The trishul will slightly rise a number of times of its own accord and it will pierce bindu with its central prong.

As it pierces bindu, repeat the mantra 'bindu bhedan', which means 'bindu piercing'.

After some times release vajroli mudra and moola bandha.

Open the upper gates and bring your hands down to your knees.

Exhale with ujjayi through the spinal passage from bindu to mooladhara.



Mentally repeat "mooladhara" 3 times.

Then inhale through the frontal passage up to bindu to repeat the kriya.

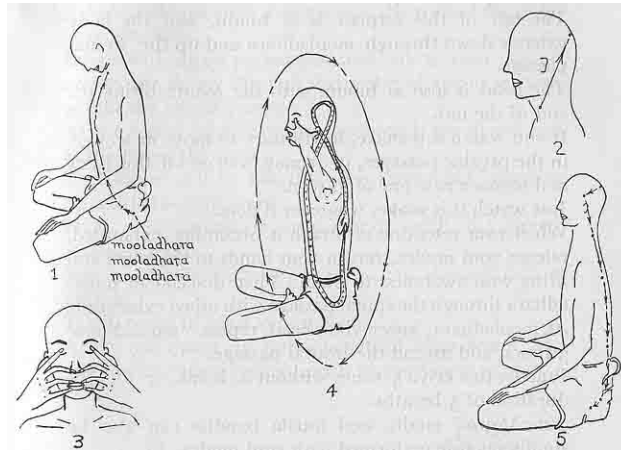
Practise 5 full rounds or breaths, and after the fifth round, end the practice after exhalation.

Note: It is extremely important that the back be held perfectly straight throughout this kriya. If the spine is not straight, the sensation that follows the piercing of bindu will not be perceived.

* It is important that vajroli mudra be correctly performed for it also heightens the sensations experienced during this practice. When vajroli mudra is perfected, the contraction of vajra nadi can be achieved without contracting the anal sphincter muscles. The sensation is like an electric current running the full length of vajra nadi to the brain. Try to sensitize your awareness to the point where you actually feel the piercing of bindu like an electric shock.

* As you ascend and descend arohan and awarohan, you can mentally repeat the names of the chakras and kshetram if you want.

No. 11: Shakti chalini (conduction of the thought force)



Sit in siddhasana, siddha yoni asana or padmasana.

Your eyes should remain closed throughout.

Practise khechari mudra.

Exhale completely and bring your awareness to mooladhara.

Bend your head forward.

Repeat mentally, "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara", and then ascend the frontal passage to bindu with ujjayi inhalation, raising your head as you approach bindu.

Retain the breath inside, and then practise yoni mudra, closing your ears, eyes, nostrils and lips with the fingers.

Allow your consciousness to rotate in a continuous cycle, descending the spinal passage to mooladhara and rising up the frontal passage to bindu in an unbroken loop, while you keep the breath retained inside.

Visualize a thin green snake moving through the psychic passageways.

The tail of this serpent is at bindu, and the body extends down through mooladhara and up the frontal passage.

The head is also at bindu, with the mouth biting the end of the tail.

If you watch this snake, it will start to move in a circle in the psychic passages, or it may even go off this track and follow a new one of its own.

Just watch this snake, whatever it does.

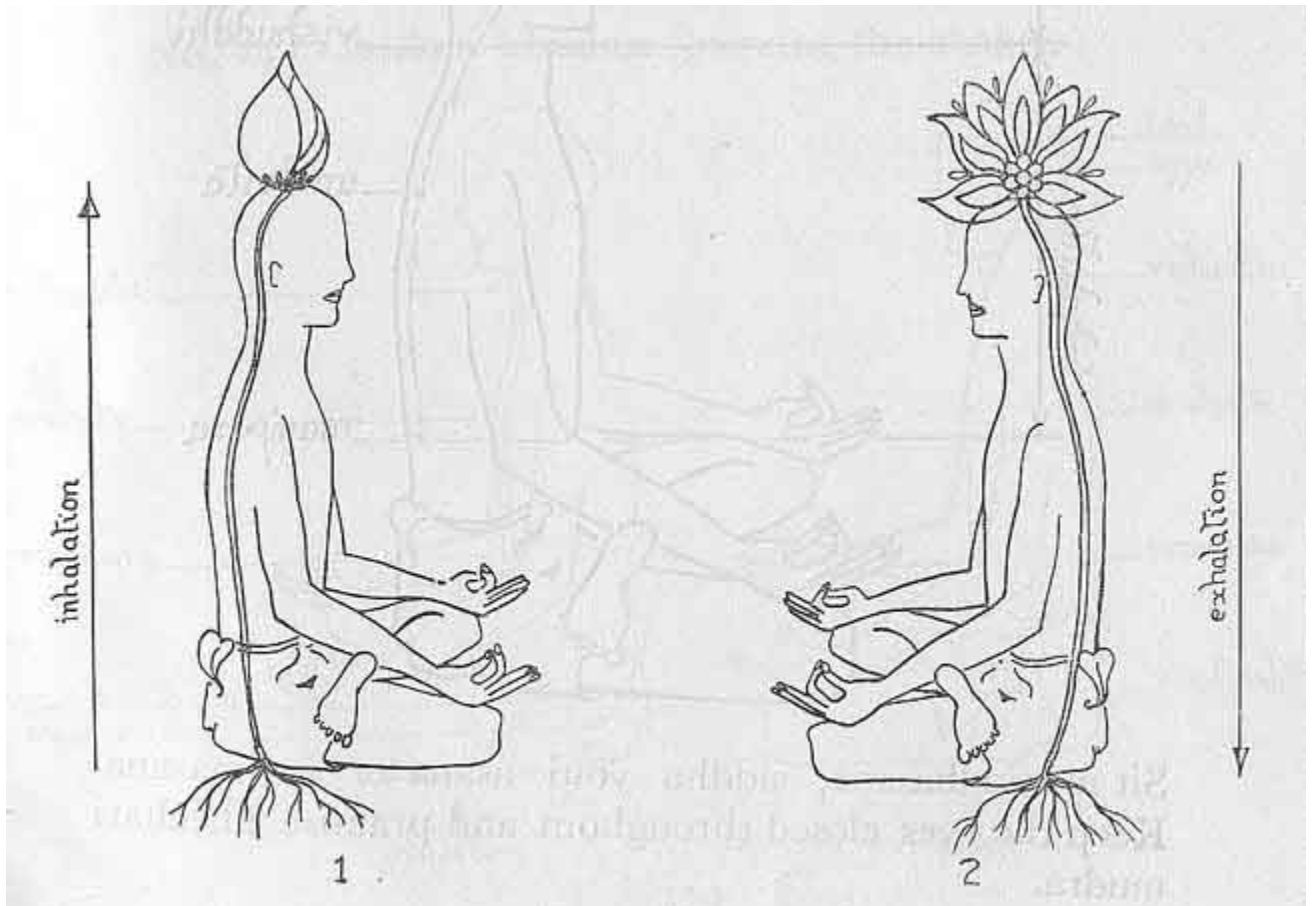
When your retention of breath is becoming exhausted, release yoni mudra, return your hands to the knees and bring your awareness to bindu. Then descend to

mooladhara through the spinal passage with ujjayi exhalation. At mooladhara., lower your head, repeat 'mooladhara' 3 times, and ascend the frontal passage.

Practise this kriya 5 times without a break, or for the duration of 5 breaths.

Note: Vajroli mudra and moola bandha can also be simultaneously performed with yoni mudra.

No. 12: Shambhavi (Parvati's lotus)



Sit in siddhasana, siddha yoni asana or padmasana.

Close your eyes and practise khechari mudra.

Visualize a lotus flower with a long thin stem extending downward.

The roots of the lotus are white or transparent green.

They spread out from mooladhara chakra.

The thin green lotus stem is in your spinal passage.

The lotus flower is at sahasrara, and it is closed like a bud.

At the bottom of the bud are a few light green immature petals. The main petals of the flower are pink with fine red veins.

Try to see this lotus clearly. You visualize it in chidakasha, but you feel it in your body.

Exhale and take your awareness to the root of the lotus at mooladhara.

Inhale with ujjayi pranayama and allow your awareness to rise slowly through the center of the lotus stem, within the spinal passage.

At the end of inhalation, you will reach the closed bud at the top of the stem.

Your ascent will be like that of a caterpillar, climbing up inside the thin stem.

Hold your awareness at sahasrara with the breath retained inside.

You are inside the lotus, but you can also see it from outside.

It will begin to open very slowly.

As the bud opens out into a beautiful lotus flower, you will see the yellow pollen-tipped stamens in its center.

Then it will slowly close again, to open again almost immediately.

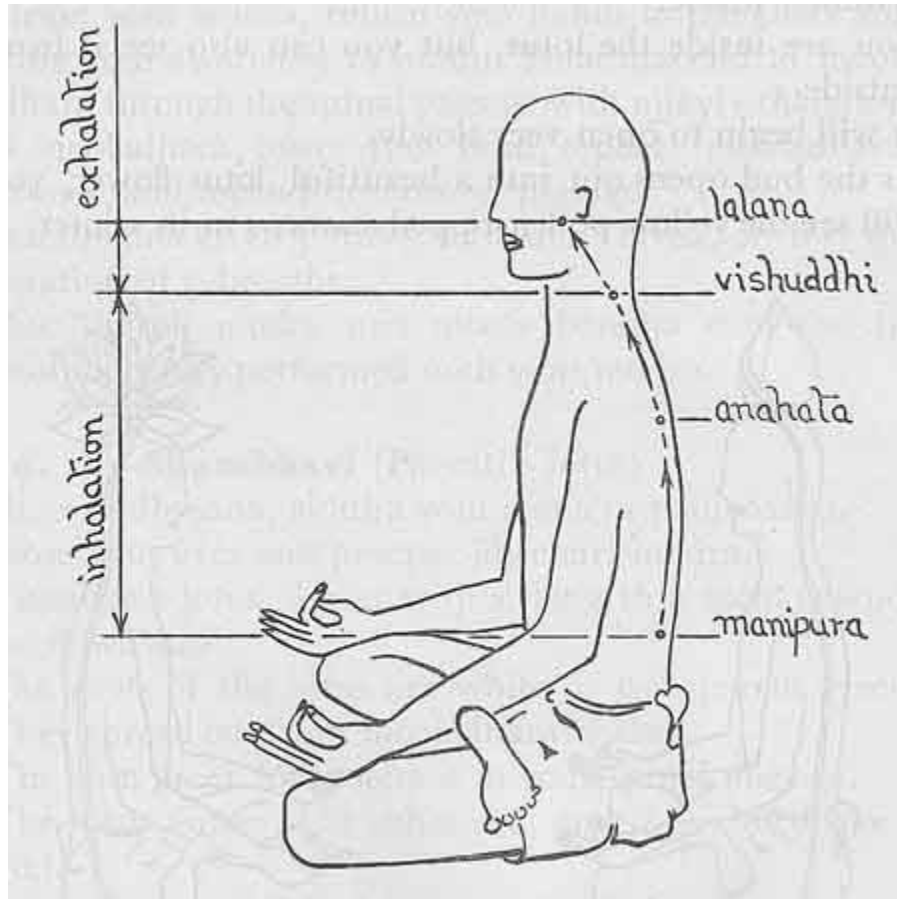
After the lotus has ceased to open and close, and it remains sealed, then slowly descend through the stem to mooladhara, drifting down on the wave of your ujjayi exhalation.

Remain at mooladhara for a few seconds, visualizing the roots spreading out in all directions.

Then once again, ascend the stem with ujjayi inhalation.

Ascend and descend 11 times and then end this kriya.

No. 13: Amrit pan (the quaffing of nectar)



Sit in siddhasana, siddha yoni asana or padmasana.

Keep the eyes closed throughout and practise khechari mudra.

Bring your awareness to manipura chakra, where there is a storehouse of a warm, sweet liquid.

Exhale fully with ujjayi.

Inhale with ujjayi, drawing a quantity of this liquid up to vishuddhi chakra through the spinal passage with the suction power of your breath.

Remain at vishuddhi for some seconds.

The nectar which you have raised from manipura will become icy cold at vishuddhi.

Then with ujjayi, exhale up to lalana chakra (at the back of the soft palate), through the nectar passage.

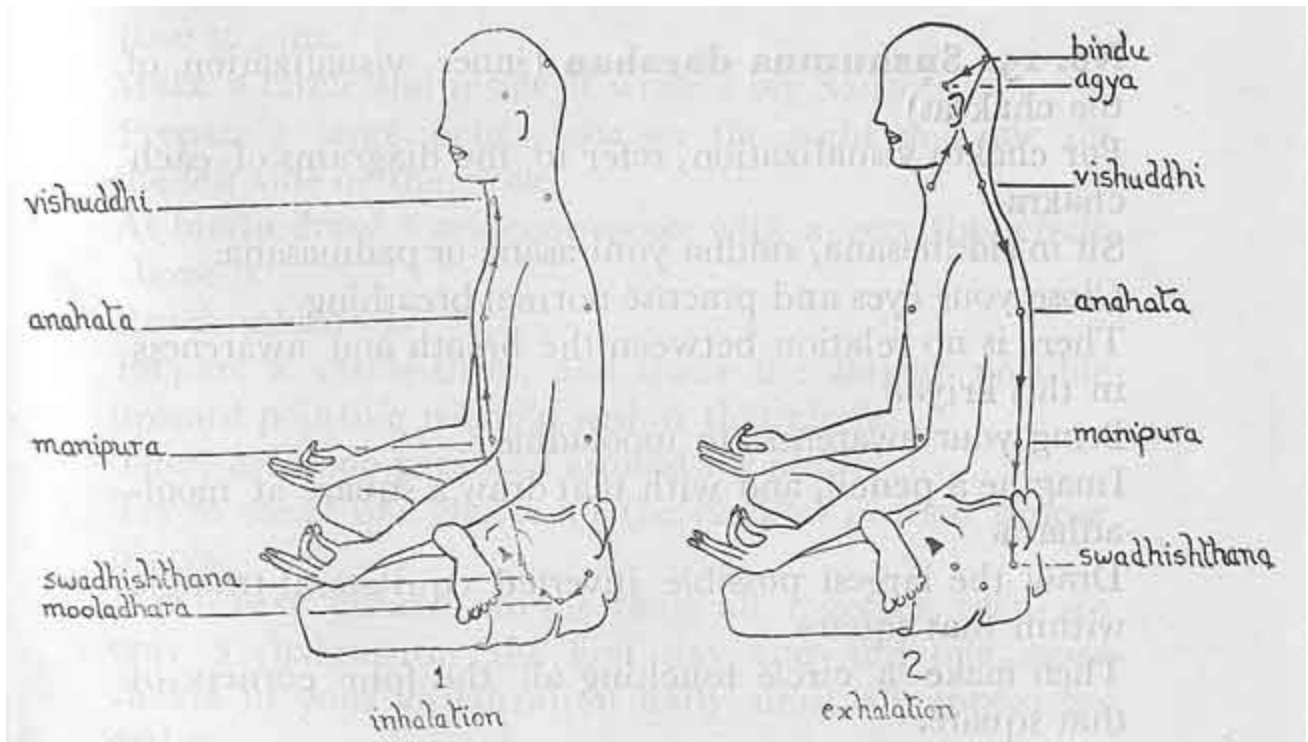
Blow the cool nectar up to lalana with the breath.

Your breath will immediately disperse by itself once you have reached lalana. Immediately return your awareness to manipura chakra.

With another ujjayi inhalation, continue the upward transfer of liquid.

Practise 9 times in all.

No. 14 Chakra bhedan (piercing the chakras)



Assume siddhasana, siddha yoni asana or padmasana.

Keep your eyes closed throughout.

Practise khechari mudra and ujjayi pranayama.

Breathe without any break between inhalation and exhalation.

Exhale and bring your awareness down to swadhishthana chakra at the base of the spine.

Inhale and direct your consciousness first to mooladhara and then up the frontal passage.

At about the level of vishuddhi kshetram, the breath will run out and you will immediately start exhalation.

Exhale from vishuddhi kshetram to bindu and then down the spine from ajna to swadhishthana chakra to complete one round.

This kriya should actually be practised for 59 rounds, but if introversion starts to occur before you have completed the rounds, discontinue the practice and go on to the next kriya.

Note: If desired, mental repetition of chakras and kshetram can also be done.

No. 15: Sushumna darshan (inner visualization of the chakras)

For chakra visualization, refer to the diagrams of each chakra.

Sit in siddhasana, siddha yoni asana or padmasana.

Close your eyes and practise normal breathing.

There is no relation between the breath and awareness in this kriya.

Bring your awareness to mooladhara.

Imagine a pencil, and with that draw a square at mooladhara.

Draw the largest possible inverted equilateral triangle within that square.

Then make a circle touching all the four corners of that square.

Prepare 4 petals, one for each side of the square.

Bring your awareness to swadhisthana.

Prepare a circle there with the same radius as the one at mooladhara.

Draw 6 petals around the edge of the circle, and a crescent moon inside the bottom of the circle.

Now come to manipura.

Draw a circle, and then make the biggest possible inverted triangle to fit this circle.

In the center draw a ball of fire.

Make 10 petals around the circle.

Raise the consciousness to anahata.

Draw 2 triangles there, one pointing upward and the other inverted. They are interlaced, both crossing each other.

Surround them with a circle having 12 petals.

Then come to vishuddhi.

Draw a circle, and place a smaller circle within the circle, like a drop of nectar.

Make 16 petals around that circle.

Rise to ajna.

Make a circle and inside it write a big Sanskrit *Om*.

Prepare 2 large petals, one on the right and one on the left side of the circle.

At bindu draw a crescent moon with a very tiny circle above it.

Reach sahasrara.

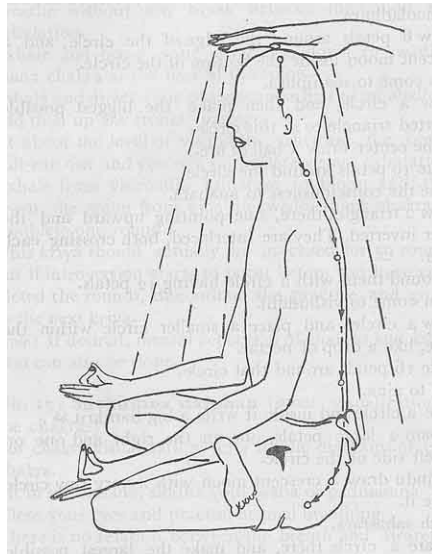
Prepare a circle there, and make the largest possible upward pointing triangle within that circle.

There are 1000 petals all around the circle.

Try to see at one glance all the chakras in their proper places.

If it is very difficult to see them all together, then see only 2 chakras on the first day and add one more chakra to your visualization daily until all appear together.

No. 16: Prana ahuti (infusing the divine prana)



Sit in siddhasana, siddha yoni asana or padmasana.

Close your eyes and breathe normally.

Feel the soft touch of a divine hand lying on your head.

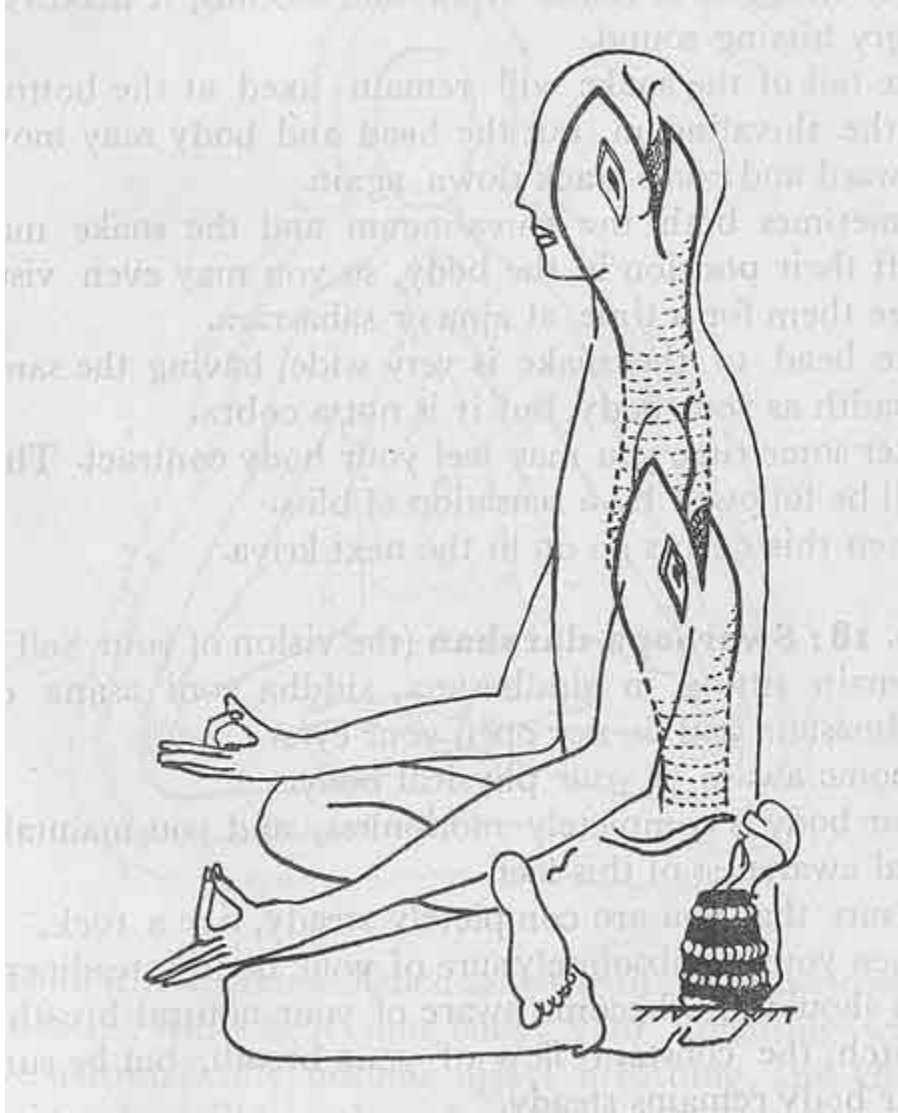
The hand is infusing subtle prana into your body and mind and the prana is travelling down from sahasrara through the spinal passage.

You may experience it as a wave of cold, heat, energy, electric current, or as a stream of wind or liquid.

Its passage will result in vibrations, shocks, jerks or tickling sensations which course through you.

When the prana has reached mooladhara, then immediately go on to the next kriya without waiting to experience the prana a second time.

No. 17: Utthan (raising the kundalini)



Sit in siddhasana, siddha yoni asana or padmasana.

Keep your eyes closed throughout.

Again the breathing is normal in this kriya.

Bring your awareness to mooladhara chakra.

Try to visualize it clearly and notice all details.

You will see a black shivalingam made of a smoky gaseous substance.

The bottom and the top of the lingam are cut off, and circled around it is a red baby snake.

This red baby snake is trying to uncoil itself so it can move upward through sushumna.

As it struggles to release itself and ascends, it makes an angry hissing sound.

The tail of the snake will remain fixed at the bottom of the shivalingam, but the head and body may move upward and come back down again.

Sometimes both the shivalingam and the snake may shift their position in the body, so you may even visualize them for a time at ajna or sahasrara.

The head of the snake is very wide, having the same breadth as your body, but it is not a cobra.

After some time you may feel your body contract. This will be followed by a sensation of bliss.

When this occurs go on to the next kriya.

No. 18: Swaropa darshan (the vision of your Self)

Remain sitting in siddhasana, siddha yoni asana or padmasana and do not open your eyes.

Become aware of your physical body.

Your body is completely motionless, and you maintain total awareness of this fact.

Be sure that you are completely steady, like a rock.

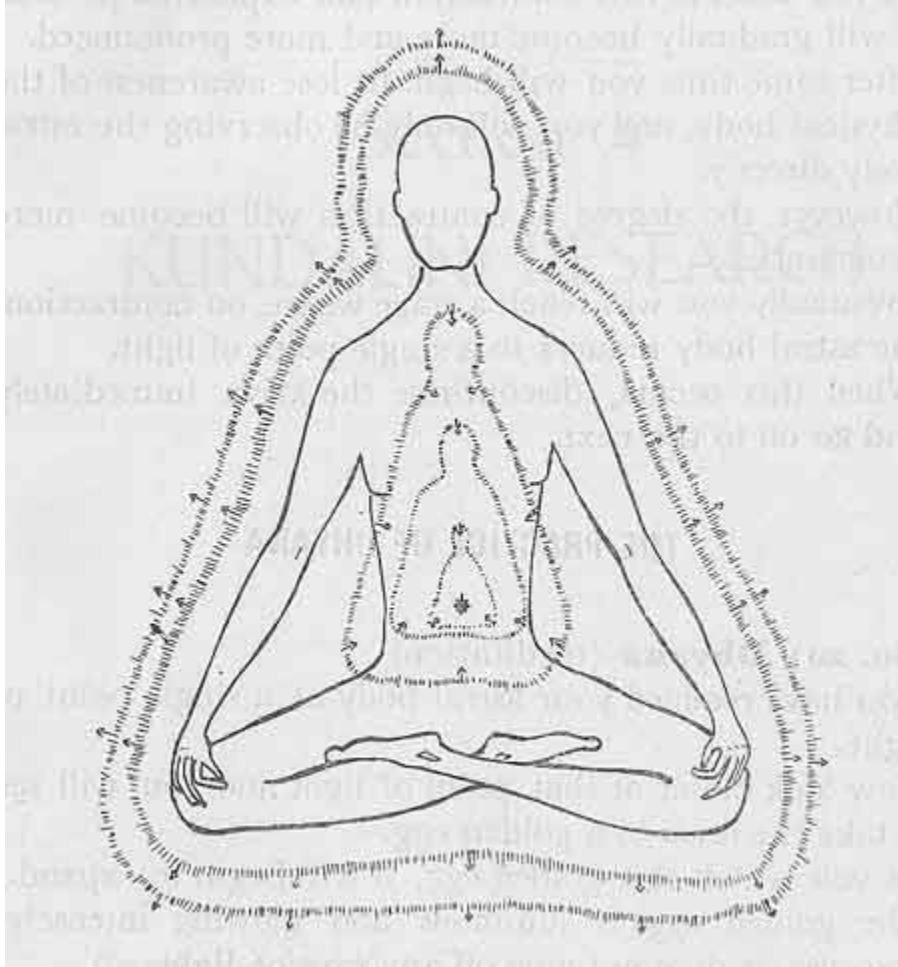
When you are absolutely sure of your bodily steadiness, you should also become aware of your natural breath. Watch the constant flow of your breath, but be sure your body remains steady.

Your body will start to become stiff.

As it becomes stiffer, your awareness will shift completely to your breathing; however, the body will continue to become stiffer and stiffer of its own accord.

When your body has become as rigid as a stone, and it is beyond your control to move it even if you tried, then go on to the next kriya.

No.19: Linga sanchalana (astral conduction)



Remain still in your stiffened asana with the eyes closed.

Due to the stiffness of your body, your breathing will have automatically become ujjayi breathing, and khechari mudra will have been formed.

Be totally aware of your breathing.

You will notice that with each inhalation your body seems to be expanding.

And with each exhalation your body appears to be contracting.

It is peculiar though, because your physical body is not moving; it is still and as stiff as a statue.

It is your astral body that you experience expanding and contracting.

As you observe this contraction and expansion process, it will gradually become more and more pronounced.

After some time you will begin to lose awareness of the physical body, and you will only be observing the astral body directly.

However, the degree of contraction will become more pronounced.

Eventually you will reach a stage where, on contraction, the astral body reduces to a single point of light.

When this occurs, discontinue the kriya immediately and go on to the next.

THE PRACTICE OF DHYANA

No. 20: Dhyana (meditation)

You have realized your astral body as a single point of light.

Now look closer at that point of light and you will see it take the form of a golden egg.

As you watch this golden egg, it will begin to expand.

The golden egg is luminous and glowing intensely; however, it does not give off any rays of light.

As the golden egg becomes larger, it will begin to take on the same shape as that of your astral and physical bodies.

This form, however, is not a material or even a subtle form.

This form is glowing light.

It is your causal self.

Evidence for the Existence of Chakras

Kundalini yoga teaches us techniques to influence our nervous system and mind so as to bring about total balance and reintegration at every level of our being. It is an expanded concept of man, a method of developing creative awareness and, more than this, of putting the knowledge gained to use via a system of experiential techniques. It helps us to develop a new outlook on life and ourselves. The chakras and their interaction within the totality of our personality, stretched between ida and pingala, balanced in sushumna, open up new dimensions for our mind and understanding to explore and develop.

The techniques of kundalini involve **kriyas, combinations of asana, pranayama, mudra and bandha, rotation of breath and consciousness through psychic passages and subtle spaces, repetition of mantra and the piercing of psychic centers** in order to heat up the psychic and physical energies of man and to activate and awaken the chakras to our conscious level of experience

and control. The techniques are also designed to bring about balanced purification and activation of all the chakras, but with the **gentle accentuation of one or two important centers**. Certain techniques, such as **ajapa japa**, achieve this, creating a psychic friction which ignites the spark of higher consciousness.

When conditions for ignition reach the required temperature and pressure, energy is liberated within the body and mind, transforming our total personality. This energy must be real and actual; though perhaps as yet undefined and not qualified. It is measurable at both the physical and psychic levels if we have the correct conditions, equipment and understanding of the phenomena. In this regard, several researchers have begun to pioneer exploration into the uncharted depths of the human psyche and are devising techniques and equipment to assess, measure and scientifically prove the existence of the chakras as the primary controlling points for different levels of our being.

Measuring the chakras

One man who has helped to pioneer scientific research into yoga and the phenomena of kundalini and chakras is Dr. Hiroshi Motoyama. He states, "Fascinated... I too began physiological experiments about fifteen years ago to try to determine if chakras actually exist and their relationship to the autonomic nervous system and internal organs... Through various examinations we have been able to determine that there are significant differences in the physiological function of the organ associated with the chakra that the individual subjects claimed to have awakened. Therefore, this research has led to the conclusion that chakras do, in fact, exist." (1)

In his search for the existence of chakras, Motoyama has developed his own machinery. One of these is the 'chakra instrument' which is designed to detect the electromagnetic field of the body and any changes which take place in it due to chakra stimulation and activation. Looking like a telephone booth and enclosed in a light-proof, lead-shielded room, the machine was designed to detect energy generated in the body and then emitted from it in terms of various physical variables such as electrical, magnetic and optical energy changes. Copper electrodes are positioned at the top and bottom of the cage and a sliding, square panel with electrodes on all four sides (left, right, front, back), is free to traverse up and down the frame structure so as to be positioned at any part of the subject's body. An electromagnetic field is set up between the electrodes and any vital energy ejected from the body affects this very sensitive field.

A copper electrode and a photo-electric cell are positioned 12 and 20 centimeters in front of the subject, level with the classical position for a given chakra. The location is monitored for changes as the individual concentrates his mental energy at the chakra point, and measurements are made for 3 to 5 minutes before, during and after concentration on the chakra. Because of its powerful pre-amplifier (impedance near infinity), even the most subtle energy ejection can be picked up and recorded. Information recorded is sent to various amplifiers, computerized analyzers and oscilloscopes and is recorded on a highly sensitive chart recorder. Other equipment is also used: to monitor respiration, autonomic nervous system (galvanic skin resistance), changes in blood flow (plethysmograph), heart (electrocardiograph),

subtle vibrations in the skin (micro-tremor), so as to measure other effects of chakra stimulation on the body and to make comparisons and interpretations.

Motoyama has used his equipment extensively to determine diseases in the body. (2) In one case he measured a woman who was to have a uterine tumor removed a week later. Measurements on his AMI machine (refer to the chapter entitled "Evidence for the Existence of Nadis") showed imbalance in the related meridians. The pattern of energy measured by the 'chakra instrument' in front of the uterus (swadhisthana chakra) was much greater and quite different than normal. Motoyama's research indicates that there is a definite correspondence between physical disease and disturbance in the energy of the chakra traditionally said by yogis to control that part of the physical body.

Activity in the chakras

Motoyama has also measured chakra activity in normal subjects and recorded and compared readings in subjects practising yoga versus untrained, control subjects. (3) He found that in an untrained subject concentrating on ajna chakra there was no change recorded by the electrodes. The lines on the recording paper remained flat before, during and after concentration.

A subject who had been practising stimulation of swadhisthana chakra for some time showed a great deal of activation of that center, and much greater than in the control subject who showed none at all. Large amplitude waves were seen before, during and after concentration, indicating activation, however, there was no change during the period for concentration, indicating lack of control over the center. This compares with another subject who had been practising yoga for five years and who evidenced a marked rise in electrical activity from ajna chakra but only during the time of concentration. The results indicate that he had developed control over his ajna chakra.

'Chakra instrument' studies have been made with several yogis. (4) Dr. A.K. Tebecis, a former professor of Canberra University, Australia, who had studied yoga throughout Asia and who claims to have experienced astral projection due to the awakening of kundalini, was tested on the 'chakra instrument'. Dr. Tebecis concentrates on anahata chakra during meditation and also has a chronic digestive disorder. The AMI revealed instability in the nadis involved in digestion, manipura chakra, and also in those related to the swadhisthana area. When the 'chakra instrument' was used to measure manipura and anahata, no change was found at manipura. Anahata concentration revealed considerable intensification of energy during the period of concentration.

Two unusual findings have also been reported by Motoyama. In one case, not only did the subject develop a more intense electrical reading during concentration on manipura, but also had the subjective experience that psychic energy was being ejected from manipura. During this time the positive electrical potential vanished, but only during the time of her subjective sensation, and would reappear again as soon as the feeling of emission vanished. Motoyama states:

v"One might surmise that the psi energy generated a negative electrical potential

which neutralized the positive electrical charge. However, it is also possible to postulate the creation of a new physical energy. In fact, it is my opinion that the psi energy emitted from R.B.'s manipura chakra actually extinguished the surrounding physical energy. I take this stand because the positive potential was precisely neutralized and because there was never any appearance of a negative potential." (5)

The second case involves a subject who concentrated on anahata chakra. As the subject relaxed, the chakra area was seen to be activated. She was then asked to concentrate on the anahata area and it was arranged that any time she had the subjective experience of psi energy emission she was to press a button which caused a mark to be made on the chart. It was found that when this mark appeared the photoelectric cell signalled the presence of a weak light being generated in the light-proof room. Her chakra monitor also detected electrical energy of high potential and frequency.

Motoyama states that these findings imply that psychic energy working in anahata chakra may be able to create energy in the physical dimension (light, electricity, etc.). It appears that whatever energy is being produced in a developed and refined chakra circuit is capable of extinguishing or creating energy in the physical dimension, which supports **the yogic view of chakras as transducers, converting psychic energy into physical energy and back**. Motoyama feels that if further research substantiates his findings, then the Law of Conservation of Energy, as one of the basic foundation stones of modern physics, will have to be revised.

The verification of an energy at the psychic plane which, though of unknown source and substance, can influence matter, has been long claimed by yogis. It is also thought to be the basis of healing and of all sciences in which mind is used to control matter. **Yogis even state that the world is a manifestation of mind**, a view which is now being supported more and more by physicists, especially those working with the subatomic particles that make up all of matter and which lie midway between matter and pure energy (prana).

Motoyama states, "I feel that the continuation of research into the nature of psi energies, by many others as well as myself, will lead to considerable change in our views of matter, of mind and body, of human beings, and of the world itself." (6)

The psychic level

Objective evidence for the existence of the chakras also appears to have been found by kinesiologist Valerie Hunt and her associates at UCLA in America. (7) Assisted by Rosalyn Bruyere, a psychic "aura reader", Hunt used a number of measurements in order to study the body's field emission when it is being stimulated by deep muscle massage (Rolfing). This was prompted by an earlier observation that after Rolfing and meditation there was an increase in the electromyographic baseline.

Hunt and associates utilized electromyographic equipment (EMG) which measures the steady, low voltage of muscular activity plus several other

instruments. Electrodes were attached to eight sites, including chakra locations such as the crown (sahasrara), eyebrow center (ajna), throat (vishuddhi), heart (anahata), base of the spine and acupuncture points on the foot and knee. The sites for the electrodes were in places where muscle activity was minimal and, therefore, electrical readings would indicate energy from a different source. The electrodes were placed on the body in consultation with the "aura reader".

The individual being experimented on was given Rolfing (deep muscle massage), designed to liberate deeper subconscious tension, and, therefore, theoretically able to affect chakra activity. As the massage progressed the EMG readings were recorded on one track of a two-tracked tape recorder. Simultaneously, while isolated in another room and oblivious to the EMG and subject's reports, Bruyere recorded on the second track her observations of psychic activity in terms of color change at the various centers. Hunt was able to question the aura reader via a separate audio system so that no clue as to what the subject was experiencing or what was going on at the EMG level could be detected by the psychic.

At the same time the subject related his experience which was tape recorded using a second microphone, and any similarity between his experience, the symptoms of chakra activation and the EMG recording were noted.

It was quickly evident in the central monitoring room where Hunt was sitting, that the EMG changes and the distinctive wave forms being recorded correlated with the colors reported by the sensitive, as did the experience of the subject. Later analysis, whether by wave form, Fourier-frequency analysis or sonogram, produced consistently the same pattern of results.

Hunt acknowledged that the possible interpretations of this data are staggering. The radiations were taken directly from the body surface, quantitatively measured in a natural state and were isolated by scientifically accepted data resolution procedures. The study concluded that there had been direct correspondence in every instance throughout all recordings between the distinctive wave form and the psychic's description of the color emanating from the chakra. For example, every time a medium-large, sharp deflection with single or double peaks at the top occurred, the psychic reported the color blue, while red corresponded to large, sharp clumps of regular and irregular spikes of short duration interspersed with plateaux. Yellow was a broad, smooth wave resembling an uneven sine wave.

The relationship between the emotional states and the colors was also accurate. Emotions, imagery, interpersonal relations and the state of resiliency and plasticity of the connective tissue are related to the color, and the state of the aura as seen by the psychic.

It is an interesting fact that in early Rolfing sessions the chakras appeared to be uneven, small, low in frequency and amplitude and with indiscriminate or dark primary colors. As the technique continued the chakras became large, even in size, and of lighter color, while the wave forms were of higher amplitude and frequency. Some chakras which had been closed, opened, producing kaleidoscopic color effects, such as dark blue, yellow, red-orange and olive green. By the fifth hour of Rolfing all subjects had a clear blue aura. By the seventh and eighth hours the colors were predominantly light and blended, for example, peach, pink, ice blue and cream. Higher frequencies were associated with pleasant experiences.

Developing our psyche

Hunt's research is important at several levels. It firstly supports the claims of yogis and psychics that other levels of perception, more subtle and yet intimately connected with the physical body, do in fact exist. Though it has been called extrasensory perception it appears rather to be an extension of the normal range of perception of physical events into the more subtle.

According to yogis, development of ajna chakra and the pineal/thalamic area of the brain, plus relaxed concentration of mind, allows us to see things which most of us miss because of gross physical and mental tensions and a dissipated, distracted state of mind. There is nothing miraculous, abnormal or supernormal about psychic phenomena. **Most of us just do not look at things long enough to allow the subtle to register in our brains.** We see something and are immediately distracted, thinking that there is nothing else to see or learn from a situation. But if we take our time we can learn, much more.

We know that vision is our major information processing system and therefore tied into many other neurological systems. Defects in the visual system are now linked to other problems such as allergies, anxiety, insomnia, postural problems, and a whole range of physical and psychological problems. (8) Connecticut optometrist Albert Shankman is quoted as saying "The skill of seeing relationships is a principal object of visual training. Visual training is essentially brain training." (9) Shankman and others have observed that visual flow and flexibility are associated with a more flexible, creative thought style.

Yoga follows the same principle, for example in trataka, an essential component of kundalini yoga. Trataka teaches us to gaze at things without preconceptions and to allow the information to impinge on our brains, to allow the connections time to come together and the inner knowledge, the processed information within the brain, time to formulate itself fully and rise up to the conscious plane. This is what yogis mean when they say that yoga balances the external and the internal, the right and left sides of the brain, ida and pingala, and awakens faculties that lie dormant within us all but which we do not know exist and which we do not develop.

Psychic vision, a side-effect of kundalini yoga and part of the awakening of intuition, inner vision and inner knowledge, is one of these capacities. All it means is that we are relaxed and we take our time to look at things without preconception. Hunt's research verifies that this faculty is not a myth and not confined just to yogis practising sadhana for years in isolation in the Himalayas, but is also verifiable within the confines of a laboratory.

Verifying the chakras

The work of Motoyama and Hunt points to the fact that within the physical body there are locations which, though they may not have any obvious physical or structural demarcation, have definite functional characteristics which differentiate

from other parts of the body. It verifies the fact that the yogic descriptions of these points correspond to physical emanations in the case of Motoyama's research and psychic emanations in the case of Hunt's research.

We see then that the chakra locations have both a physical component and a psychic component. This scientific description fits the yogic definition of chakras as vortices of energy, the interacting points of the most powerful psychic and physical forces which control our total human existence. The studies also confirm that the traditional chakra locations, when activated, are related to emanations of light and color, and to emotions and experiences which are subtle and usually stored in the subconscious mind, beyond our usual conscious capacity. When we concentrate and focus psychic energy, chitta shakti, on the chakra, or if we manipulate the areas of the body under its control, by asana or massage, for example, we can stimulate activity at both the physical and psychic levels of that center.

What lies at the basis of these energy emanations at the neurological and mental levels, how these forces interact to control our psychophysiology, behavior and experience, still requires much more research. What we do know is that the concept of chakras has a definite psychophysiological foundation, that they affect our body, emotions and mind, and that they produce both physical and psychic energy which can be measured and quantified. There is something within the body of man, which yogis called chakra, awaiting our discovery and awakening.

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Glossary

Adwaita: non-dual; the concept of oneness.

Agni: fire.

Ajapa japa: meditational practice in which mantra is repeated in coordination with the ingoing and outgoing breath.

Ajna chakra: the psychic command center situated in the midbrain.

Akasha: ethereal tspace, e.g. the inner space before the forehead known as chidakasha, the heart space known as hridayakasha, and the ether of outer space known as mahakasha.

Amaroli: yogic tantric practice in which the urine is used either internally or externally for mental and physical health.

Amrit: psychic nectar which is secreted in bindu and drops from lalana chakra to vishuddhi chakra, causing a feeling of blissful intoxication.

Amygdala: small area of grey matter in the temporal lobe, part of the limbic system.

Anahata chakra: the psychic center related to the region of the heart.

Anandamaya kosha: transcendental dimension; personal and collective unconscious.

Annamaya kosha: the physical body or level of existence; the conscious aspect.

Aorta: largest artery of the body, which takes oxygenated blood from the heart for distribution throughout the body.

Apana: vital energy in the lower part of the body, below the navel.

Asana: a steady and comfortable position of the body.

Ashram: yogic community where the inmates live and work equally under the guidance of a guru.

Astral body: the subtle, psychic body; finer than the physical body.

Atman: the pure self, beyond body and mind.

Atma shakti: spiritual force.

Aushadi: awakening of spiritual power through the use of herbs or plant preparations.

Autogenic training: psychotherapy that works with the body and mind simultaneously; learning to manipulate the bodily functions through the mind.

Avatara: divine incarnation.

Avidya: ignorance.

Awareness: the faculty of conscious knowing.

Ballistocardiograph: machine which measures small body motions accompanying the movement of blood through the circulatory system.

Bandha: psychomuscular energy lock which redirects the flow of psychic energy in the body.

Bhajan: devotional song.

Bhakta: one who follows the path of bhakti yoga.

Bhaktiyoga: the yoga of devotion.

Bhrumadhya: the eyebrow center; kshetram or contact point for ajna chakra.

Bija mantra: seed sound; a basic mantra or vibration which has its origin in trance consciousness.

Bindu: the psychic center situated at the top back of the head; a point or drop which is the substratum of the whole cosmos, the seat of total creation.

Brahma: the divine spirit, Hindu god; creator of the universe.

Brahmacharya: control and redirection of sexual energy towards spiritual awakening.

Brahma granthi: knot of creation. Psycho muscular knot in the perineum which must be released for kundalini to enter and ascend through sushumna nadi. It symbolizes the blockage posed by material and sensual attachment.

Brahmamuhurta : the time between 4 and 6 am. This is the sattvic time of day, best suited to yogic sadhana.

Brahman: absolute reality.

Brahma nadi: the most subtle pranic flow within the sushumna nadi.

Brahmin: a member of the highest Hindu caste, namely the priestly caste.

Buddhi: the higher intelligence, concerned with real wisdom; the faculty of valuing things for the advancement of life and conscious awareness.

Causal body: the body you experience in deep sleep and in certain types of samadhi.

Central canal: the hollow passage within the spinal cord. In the subtle body, this is the path of sushumna nadi.

Cerebral cortex: grey matter on the surface of the brain responsible for higher mental functions.

Cerebrospinal fluid: (CSF) cushion of fluid protecting the brain and spinal cord.

Cervical plexus: autonomic nerve plexus in the neck associated with vishuddhi chakra.

Cervix: the circular opening leading into the womb; seat of mooladhara chakra in the female body.

Chakra : literally 'wheel or vortex'; major psychic center in the subtle body, responsible for specific physiological and psychic functions.

Chela: disciple.

Chitta: mind; conscious, subconscious and unconscious levels of the brain.

Cingulate gyrus: a convolution of the brain, part of the limbic system.

Coccygeal plexus: small nerve plexus at the base of the spine behind the pelvic cavity, related to swadhisthana chakra.

Consciousness: the medium of universal and individual awareness.

Corpus callosum: fibers connecting the two hemispheres of the brain.

Deity: a form of divinity, a divine being having subordinate functions.

Devata: divine power.

Devi: a goddess; a manifestation of Shakti.

Dharana: concentration; continuity of mental process on one object or idea without leaving it.

Dharma: duty; code of harmonious living; spiritual path.

Dhumra lingam: smoky (obscured) lingam; the symbol of Shiva as manifest in mooladhara chakra.

Dhyana: meditation, in the sense of intense meditation for an extended period of time.

Diksha: initiation into spiritual life by a guru.

Dopamine: chemical involved in the excitatory systems of the brain.

Durga: Hindu goddess; a personification of Shakti, pictured riding upon a tiger, to whom personal ambition is rendered.

Dwaita: the philosophy of dualism in which man and God are considered to be separated.

EGG: electrocardiogram. Tracing of electric current produced by nerve cells in the brain.

EMG: electromyography. Recording of electrical properties of muscles.

Epiglottis: flap of cartilage at the back of the throat which integrates the swallowing and breathing processes.

Frontal lobe: anterior portion of the brain containing the motor area.

Ganga: the river Ganges, the longest and most sacred river in India.

Gauss : measurement of intensity of a magnetic field.

Granthis: the three psychic knots on the sushumna nadi which hinder the upward passage of kundalini - brahma granthi, vishnu granthi and rudra granthi.

Gunas: the three qualities of matter or prakriti - tamas, rajas and sattva.

Guru: literally, 'he who dispels darkness'; the spiritual master or teacher.

Guru chakra: another name for ajna chakra, the eye of intuition; through which the inner guru's guidance manifests.

Gyanayoga: path of yoga concerned directly with knowledge, self-awareness.

Gyanendriyas: the organs of knowledge or sensory organs such as eyes, ears, skin, etc.

Hatha yoga: a system of yoga which specially deals with practices for bodily purification.

Hippocampus: an elevation on the floor of the lateral ventricle, part of the limbic system.

Hiranyagarbha: the golden egg; womb of consciousness, the seat of supreme awareness in the crown of the head; known as sahasrara chakra.

Hridayakasha: the etheric space visualized within the heart; the heart space.

Hypo-metabolic state: state of lowered metabolism, for example, decrease in respiratory, circulatory and secretory rates.

Hypothalamus: portion of the brain that integrates temperature, sleep, food intake, development of sexual characteristics and endocrine activity.

Ida: major psychic channel which conducts manas shakti, mental energy, located on the left side of the psychic body; the 'ha' of hatha yoga.

Indriyas: sense organs.

Ishta devata: one's personal symbol, form or vision of God.

Itarakhya lingam: symbol of Shiva in ajna chakra.

Jalandhara bandha: chin lock. It compresses the prana in the trunk of the body and thereby helps to control psychic energy.

Japa: repetition of a mantra until it becomes the spontaneous form of your conscious awareness.

Jivanmukta: liberated soul, one who has attained self-realization or moksha.

Jivatma: the individual soul.

Jyotir lingam: the symbol of Shiva in sahasrara chakra. This lingam is of pure white light, symbolizing illumined astral consciousness.

Kabbalah: text dealing with the esoteric mysticism of the Judaic religion.

Kali: form of Shakti who arouses terror and fear, destroyer of ignorance in her devotees.

Karma: actions, work, the inherent subconscious imprints which make a person act.

Karma yoga: action performed unselfishly, for the welfare of others and the fulfillment of dharma.

Karmendriyas: organs of action, e.g. feet, hands, vocal chords, anus, sexual organs, etc.

Kevala kumbhaka: spontaneous breath retention.

Khechari mudra: mudra of hatha yoga and tantra, in which the tongue passes back into the pharynx to stimulate the flow of amrit from lalana chakra, activating vishuddhi chakra.

Kirtan: repetition of mantras set to music.

Koshas: sheaths or bodies.

Kshetram: contact centers for the chakras. They are found in the front of the body.

Kumbhaka: breath retention.

Kurma nadi: (tortoise nadi) nadi associated with vishuddhi chakra. Its control brings the ability to live without physical sustenance.

Lalana chakra: minor chakra in the region of the back wall of the pharynx, where amrit is stored from bindu and released to vishuddhi.

Limbic system: group of structures in the brain associated with certain aspects of emotion and behavior.

Lingam: symbol representing Lord Shiva; the male aspect of creation; symbol of the astral body.

Loka: world, dimension or plane of existence or consciousness.

Lord Shiva: archetypal renunciate and yogi who dwells in meditation high in the Himalayas; Hindu god; destroyer of the universe.

Madya: wine; also refers to spiritual intoxication resulting from drinking the nectar of immortality, amrit.

Mahakala: great or endless time.

Mahatma: great soul.

Maithuna: literally 'sacrifice'; sexual union with a spiritual purpose.

Mala: a rosary-like string of beads used in meditational practices.

Manas: one aspect of mind; the mental faculty of comparing, classifying and reasoning.

Manas shakti: mental force.

Mandala: tantric diagram used for meditation.

Manic depression: psychosis marked by severe mood swings.

Manomaya kosha: mental dimension; conscious and subconscious aspects.

Mantra: sound or series of sounds having physical, psychic or spiritual potency when recited in a certain prescribed manner.

Marga: path.

Matra: unit of measure.

Maya: principle of illusion.

Moksha: liberation from the cycle of births and deaths.

Moola bandha: yogic practice of stimulating mooladhara chakra for the awakening of kundalini. It is practised by contracting the perineum in males, or the cervix in females.

Mudra: a psychic attitude often expressed by a physical gesture, movement or posture, which affects the flow of psychic energy in the body.

Nada: sound, especially inner sound.

Nadayoga: the yoga of subtle sound.

Nadis: psychic channels for the distribution of prana in the astral body.

Neti: hatha yoga cleansing technique in which warm saline water is passed through the nasal passages; one of the shatkarmas.

Nirvana: enlightenment, samadhi; harmony between the individual consciousness and the universal consciousness.

Nivritti marga: the path leading back in towards the source from which we have first come.

Nuclear fission: the process of extracting energy from matter by splitting the atom.

Om: the underlying sound of creation; the mantra from which all others have come.

Paranoia: chronic mental disorder characterized by delusions or hallucinations.

Parasympathetic nervous system: division of the autonomic (involuntary) nervous system concerned with restorative processes and relaxation of the body and mind.

Pashu: the instinctual or animal aspect of man's nature.

Pineal gland: small pine-cone shaped endocrine gland in the midbrain directly behind the eyebrow center; the physical correlate of ajna chakra.

Pingala: the conductor and channel of prana shakti or vital force, located on the right side of the psychic body; the 'tha' of hatha yoga.

Prakriti: the basic substance or principle of the entire phenomenal or manifest world, composed of the three gunas (triguna) or attributes.

Prana: the life force in the body; bioenergy in general; the vital energy which operates in the region of the heart and lungs; the psychic equivalent of the physical breath.

Pranamaya kosha: energy dimension; conscious aspect.

Prana shakti: pranic or vital force.

Pranayama: yogic practice of manipulating and controlling the flow of prana in the subtle body by controlling the respiratory process.

Pranotthana: the impulses which pass up sushumna nadi to the higher centers of the brain when a chakra is transiently aroused. These impulses purify the sushumna passage in preparation for sustained kundalini awakening.

Pravritti marga: the path of expansion outwards into greater and greater manifestation, further away from the source of our origin.

Psi: psychic phenomena.

Psyche: the total mental aspect of man.

Psychosis: major mental disorder characterized by loss of contact with reality.

Purushai consciousness: the spirit or pure self.

Raja yoga: eightfold path of yoga formulated by Patanjali. It begins with mental stability and proceeds to the highest state of samadhi.

Rajo guna: the guna of prakriti characterized by restlessness, activity and ambition.

Rakshasa: demon; negative or self-defeating force.

Reticular activating system: (RAS) that part of the brain-stem especially concerned with arousal from sleep and maintenance of the alert, waking state of consciousness.

Rishi: seer or sage; who realizes the truth directly.

Rolfing: structural integration. Deep massage to rebalance the body structures.

Rudra granthi: (also known as Shiva granthi) the knot of Shiva. This is the psychic knot within ajna chakra, which symbolizes attachment to siddhis or higher mental attributes which must be transcended before full awakening of kundalini can occur.

Sacral plexus: nerve plexus in the back wall of the pelvis associated with swadhisthana and root chakras, and responsible for the functioning of the urinary and reproductive systems.

Sadhaka: a student of spiritual practices.

Sadhana: spiritual discipline or practice.

Sadhu: a holy man.

Sahajoli: the form of vajroji mudra practised by women; contraction of the utero-ovarian system.

Sahasrara: the thousand petalled lotus or chakra manifesting at the top of the head; the highest psychic center; the threshold between psychic and spiritual realms which contains all the chakras below it.

Samadhi: state of being above mortal existence; all-knowing and all-pervading state of being; the fulfillment of meditation; state of union with the object of meditation and the universal consciousness.

Samana: vital energy operating in the region of the navel.

Sumkhya: the ancient scientific philosophy of India which classifies all that is known without reference to an external power (God).

Samskara: past mental impression; archetype.

Sandhya: ritual worship conducted at dawn, noon and evening.

Sangha: associations, company, acquaintances.

Sankalpa: spiritual resolve. S

Sankalpa shakti: the power of will.

Sannyasa: total renunciation, perfect dedication.

Satsang: spiritual instruction, discussion and guidance from an illumined being or guru.

Sattva: one of the three gunas of prakriti; the pure or equilibrated state of mind or nature.

Saundarya Lahari: tantric prayer of Adi Shankaracharya.

Schizophrenia: severe mental/emotional disturbance characterized by hallucinations and disconnection between thoughts, feelings and actions.

Schumann resonance: magnetic resonance of the earth - 7 cycles/second.

Shabda: sound or word; the materially creative principle.

Shaivism: philosophy of Shiva worship, perhaps the most ancient faith in the world.

Shakti: power, energy; the feminine aspect of creation; the force expressed through all manifested phenomena.

Shambhavi mudra: mudra named after Shambhu (Shiva); focusing the eyes on bhrumadhya.

Shankhaprakshalana: a method of cleansing the entire alimentary canal.

Shanti: peace.

Shastras: scriptures.

Shatkarmas: the six cleansing or purifying techniques of hatha yoga.

Shiva lingam: oval-shaped stone which is the symbol of Shiva, consciousness or the astral body.

Shoonya, shoonyata: the state of absolute nothingness or void; mental vacuum.

Shuddhi: purification.

Siddha: adept, yogi; one who has control over nature, matter and the mind.

Siddhi: perfection; one of the eight occult powers; a psychic power associated with awakening of chakra functions.

Solar plexus: intersection of a group of nerves in the abdominal region; the physical manifestation of manipura chakra.

Soma: amrit; a plant used by the rishis of ancient India for the purpose of spiritual awakening and immortality.

Sushumna nadi: the most important psychic passageway. It flows in the central canal within the spinal cord.

Swadhisthana chakra: the psychic center corresponding to the coccyx or pubic region.

Swami: literally 'one who is master of his own mind'; sannyasin disciple initiated into sannyasa by a guru; one who has renounced mundane experiences as goals in life.

Swarayoga: the science of the breath cycle.

Swagambhu: self-created.

Sympathetic nervous system: division of the autonomic (involuntary) nervous system responsible for maintaining physical activity of the organ systems and expenditure of energy.

Tamas: darkness; inertia; one of the three gunas of prakriti.

Tanmatra: the sense activities - sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell, and also inner intuitive perception via the subtle organ of mind, which is the sixth sense.

Tantra: the ancient science which uses specific techniques to expand and liberate the consciousness from its limitations.

Tantra shastra: scriptures of the tantric tradition devoted to spiritual techniques, in the form of a dialogue between Shiva and Shakti. These texts outline a code of living which includes ritual, worship, discipline, meditation and the attainment of powers.

Tapasya: the practice of austerity; conditioning of the body for the removal of impurities and for overcoming the deficiencies and weaknesses of the body, mind and senses.

Tattwat: elemental nature or quality, e.g., fire, water, air, earth, ether.

Thalamus: area in the brain which receives most sensory stimuli and integrates most incoming and outgoing information. Also the center for appreciation of pain, touch and temperature.

Trataka: the meditational or hatha yoga technique which involves steadily gazing at an object.

Trishula: trident; three pronged implement held by Lord Shiva and carried by many holy men and renunciates. The three prongs symbolize the three main nadis.

Udana: the vital energy operating above the throat.

Uddiyana bandha: literally 'flying upward'; a yogic practice of pranic manipulation utilizing the abdominal muscles and organs.

Vairagya: non-attachment; state where one is calm and tranquil in the midst of the tumultuous events of the world.

Vajra nadi: the nadi which connects the expression of sexual energy with the brain and is concerned with the flow of ojas, the highest form of energy in the human body which is concentrated in the semen.

Vajroli mudra: contraction of vajra nadi.

Vasana: the desires that are the driving force behind every thought and action in life.

Vayu: air.

Vedanta: the ultimate philosophy of the Vedas.

Vedas: the oldest known religious texts of the Aryans, written more than 5000 years ago.

Ventricles: cavities in the brain where the GSF is formed.

Vigyanamaya kosha: intuitive or astral dimension; subconscious and unconscious aspects.

Vishnu: Hindu god; preserver of the universe.

Vishuddhi chakra: the psychic center located in the throat region.

Vritti: a modification arising in consciousness, likened to the circular wave pattern emanating when a stone is dropped into a still pool of water.

Vyana: vital energy which pervades the whole body.

Yantra: a symbolic design used for concentration and meditation; the visual form of a mantra.

Yoga: union; the methods and practices leading to union of individual human consciousness with the divine principle or cosmic consciousness.

Yoga nidra: psychic sleep; a yogic practice in which one can raise himself from the mundane state of body consciousness.

Yoga Sutras: text written by Patanjali, delineating the eightfold path of raja yoga, the systematic path of meditation which culminates in the samadhi experience.